LETTERS FROM A YOUNG QUEENSLANDER

3/6

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF QUEENSLAND
OXLEY MEMORIAL LIBRARY

LETTERS FROM A YOUNG QUEENSLANDER

BY

Dr. J. Marshall Allan

"Oh may I join the Choir Invisible of
those immortal dead, who live again
in souls made better by their deeds."

—GEORGE ELIOT.

SECOND EDITION.

BRISBANE.
WATSON, FERGUSON & CO. LTD.,
1916.

NO. 940.481

DATE 1916

DEDICATED

To the Cause of Freedom, and a lasting Peace.

To all who have joined the Deathless Army.

To those who have blazed the trail, and made it easier to follow.

PREFACE

The writer of these extracts was born in South Brisbane in 1886. After passing the Sydney Senior Examination at the Brisbane Grammar School he entered Edinburgh University in 1905, and graduated with honors in medicine in 1910. Some time was spent in post graduate work at Paris, Berlin, and Vienna. At the outbreak of war he was Assistant Master and Lecturer at the Rotunda Hospital, Dublin. The correspondence was private between father and son. It was not written for publication, but copies of extracts were circulated in a private reading circle. Many appreciations were received, and on the suggestion of several readers this volume is printed for private circulation—without the knowledge of the writer. It covers a period from the time of entering camp at Aldershot, September, 1914, to November, 1915. The letters have been greatly condensed, and the editor hopes that the information given may prove useful and be an incentive to others in rendering service to the Empire.

To meet numerous requests, this Second Edition was issued in February, 1916. It includes some later letters.

"Wairuna,"
Hampstead Road,
South Brisbane.

December, 1915.

INDEX.

	Pages
ALDERSHOT—	1 to 11
New Army in the making.	
BOULOGNE—	12 to 21
Work in a Base Hospital.	
The Fight for Calais.	
Christmas 1914.	
AT THE FRONT—	22 to 141
The R.A.M.C. at work.	
Bathing and Laundry experiences.	
Sanitary precautions.	
Life in the Trenches.	
Battle Scenes—all along the line.	
Neuve Chapelle and Ypres.	
Connaught Rangers.	
Highland Light Infantry.	
What the Indians did.	
Gas—Bane and Antidote.	
Aerial Warfare.	
INDIAN TYPES—	142 to 147
Impending Changes.	
THE KING'S MESSAGE—	148 to 157

WAR LETTERS FROM A YOUNG QUEENSLANDER.

The writer volunteered on the outbreak of war and entered Aldershot on 11th September, 1914.

9th Battalion King's Royal Rifle Corps.

THINGS have changed since last I wrote. The call only allowed me 48 hours—however I had my things handy, and packing did not take long.

At present all the regulars have left, but there are 100,000 of Kitchener's Army training. The country is very sandy, and covered with heath, and not specially interesting. Aldershot itself is a wilderness of barracks and parade grounds.

I reported at Headquarters, and was soon fixed up. I was then sent to report at two hospitals. Here again all the men were very kind, though obviously working under high pressure and understaffed. It was a trial going down the streets with so many Tommies saluting, but by now I am quite used to it, and the return salute is mechanical. After dinner I set out for Blackdown, six miles from Aldershot. I arrived at 10 p.m. in pitch darkness, but had a warm welcome from the officers' mess. I had no blankets with me, but the Colonel lent

me an overcoat and several rugs. Next day I reported at the Detention Hospital, and began my duties.

This is a training centre for infantry and artillery. We form part of the next Division to go abroad—the First Division of Kitchener's Army. They should be ready early in January, but long before that I hope to be shifted on nearer the front. I have charge of 2,500 men, and the married quarters in addition. Everything is in a chaotic condition, and it could not well be otherwise. They get as many recruits in a day as in a year previously, and with most of the regulars away, it makes things harder for those left behind. As red tape is not altogether absent, delays are still common.

My day begins at 9 a.m., when I hold my morning sick parade—this averages 80 to 100 per day. I enter them up in triplicate, and as so far, I have no drugs here, they all go to the Detention Hospital ten minutes off. Then I go to the latter and pull teeth if required. I am an expert at that now—though the first victim may not think so.

In addition I make up the stock bottles for the whole camp (7,000 men). This takes me well on to 1 p.m.—lunch and a smoke, and at 2 I have another sick parade, but this is light. My room is primitive—just a N.C.O.'s bunk cleared out. My orderly is a lance corporal. He is willing, and is quickly learning to spell medical names —"diarrhoea" worried him for a long time. After this parade I do my sanitary rounds. I go through all the barracks and tents and urinals, and look for defects. and

infractions of orders. Then a laze to 6 p.m., when another sick parade is due. My work is now over; it is largely routine, and there is some clerical work, particularly in the discharge of unfit men.

On the whole the men are a very fine lot, keen as mustard, and learning quickly. But there are some awful crocks. How they were medically passed beats me, and my present job is to weed them out. The War Office objected up till this week to wholesale discharging of men, but now they have got so many good men coming forward, they have allowed us a freer hand, and we can on our own responsibility discharge any one. This Battalion is a mixture of good men and rotters. I have the biggest sick parade in the district, and here is my astounding bag up to date—a lunatic, two idiots, five epileptics, a case of locomotor ataxy, a man paralysed down one side, many tubercular cases, flat feet, hernia and varicose veins galore, and a big lot of defective vision cases. So far, I have got rid of 40, and will soon have all the incapables out.

Sore feet worry a lot, and I hope soon to give a few practical hints between parades to each company in turn. After my walking tours, I know a wrinkle or two. Most of the men arrive with only what they are standing in. The weather has been cold and wet recently, and as they are out all day drilling, there has been a plentiful crop of colds and bronchitis. Friends are sending shirts, socks, etc., and soon each man should have a change. This is

no joke for them. Many hours are spent in drill, but the majority are keen, and there are few slackers. The men are a mixed lot—well-to-do and poor. The best company consists of a big batch of men who arrived together from Nottingham.

My room is in a long bungalow. My servant was picked for me from one of the companies—he is an ex-valet, so I have a good man. Such luxuries as having your clothes laid out are new to me, and will spoil me for the future. Near by is a German prisoner's camp. The doctor in charge is an old pupil of mine, and we have many a chat."

◈ ⊞ ◈

Aldershot 23/9/14.

WE were shifted on here two days ago. On Monday I marched in at the head of the rear guard, and right proud I felt. Last week I asked the Colonel if he would mind me talking to the men on some medical topics. He was delighted, and gave me every facility. So I began on the care of the feet, a subject I know a good deal about practically. I addressed the men in batches of 300 (between parades) in the open air. The Colonel and Major were at the opening lecture, and said it was just what they wanted. Later on the General came up and congratulated me. I felt proud of the praise he gave. and now the Colonel is at me for more lectures. My former experience helps me a lot, but I have yet to get experience with big audiences, and I don't

know how to spare my voice. Open-air speaking is hard, and my throat feels tired after it. The men apparently got some good tips. I purposely made my remarks short, practical, and to the point. This addressing of the troops by the doctor is new here—most of the men in charge of regiments are young graduates with no experience in speaking, so they naturally don't do it. The weeding out process has been going on relentlessly. I have now a bag of one hundred and twenty, and have got rid of nearly all the crocks. Blackdown was on a high moorland, bleak and cold. Now we are between Aldershot and Farnborough, where the Headquarters of the Flying Corps are. Biplanes whiz over us all day long, and one came a cropper yesterday quite near us.

The quarters are much better, and we have a fine mess. My work has now greatly increased. I get up at 6 a.m., and have my sick parade at 7 a.m., dole out the medicine, pull teeth, and do minor work, and then breakfast. Next I go to my headquarters at the Connaught Hospital, and report to the Colonel in charge, and get any orders from him. Sanitary rounds, and more parades finish the normal day. This still left plenty of time, but that is now past, for I have to vaccinate, and also inoculate for typhoid, the whole battalion of 1,200 men. I have to see every arm, and enter in a book the details of previous vaccinations, the number of vesicles, &c., and decide whether to do it again. This, as you can imagine, is no easy job. Typhoid vaccination is voluntary, but one tries to get all the men done. Once more I was

called on to lecture. I spoke to the men, explaining in simple language what immunity meant, what typhoid or enteric was, and why we inoculate, giving the figures obtained in India and South Africa. I explained that while their instructors were perfecting them in military duties, we doctors had a very important duty to strengthen their bodily defences against unseen minute foes. I pointed out that typhoid especially attacks young fellows, and ended up by hoping they would all be inoculated, and thus leave no stone unturned to make themselves fit in every way. The Colonel also spoke, and I did 40 men to-night. But if they re-act strongly, I am afraid there will be a lot of shirkers. I am doing the donkey work at present—it is important, and I am putting all my energies into it. My Colonel has taken a liking to me, and we have a long chat every day, and I hope that after a time I may get away to the front. At the worst I shall go on with the regiment.

Our officers are a fine lot—young fellows—many of them home on leave from India. We have great times of an evening, yarning and poking fun at each other. They help one in every way they can, and I often get hints about army etiquette, about which I naturally am ignorant. There are 110,000 recruits here, and the place simply resounds with drill instructors hard at it. The men are rapidly coming on. It is fine to watch them marching, singing away merrily. The whole of the Scottish recruits are here, and you should hear them singing —"I love a Lassie"—the real accent was there. I believe

the King may review us on Saturday, and Kitchener is going to disturb our Sunday rest with a big review on Laffan's Plain near here.

◈ ⊞ ◈

1/10/14.

I SEEM to have been all my life in the Army—the Rotunda is a far-off dream. From early morning to sunset one hears nothing but the singing and whistling. I am now engaged in the big task of re-vaccinating most of the men, and inoculating all of them against enteric. It is wearisome to stand, as I did yesterday, for four and a-half hours, and just scratch arms until I had done 200 vaccinations.

The inoculations are easier, and I do 100 a day. We are all in bed at 9.45 p.m., tired out.

One odd job I got last week was very interesting. I was ordered to look after the transport of 150 wounded from the station to the hospital. A few general instructions were all I got, then I was left alone to do it. By this I am used to just doing things and making my own precedents, and it is good for one too. You should have seen me swanking up and down the platform, giving orders galore! These men were a batch of 150, part of 1,200 who had been laid out at the Aisne.

The hospital train consisted of corridor carriages with all the fittings taken out. Along the sides of the empty coaches were beds, and others were suspended

above them. Everything was painted white. There was a good kitchen, and bunks for the doctor and his staff. These trains look very fine indeed. My transport consisted of motor cars and buses. I had a squad of R.A.M.C. orderlies and they carried the wounded to the waggons. Most of the men were severely wounded—but they were all very cheery. They all wanted cigarettes. After all was finished the chief pointed out one or two defects, and thanked me. I felt pleased at the success of my first responsible job.

Next day I went to see the men, and got my first view of shrapnel wounds. Modern artillery certainly makes a mess of poor humanity. The entrance wound is small, but the exit is a jagged area four or five times as big, and with appearances as if an explosion had occurred. There were some curious wounds. One man was hit in the cheek, a tooth knocked out, and the bullet landed in his tongue. It was not discovered for some days because of the swelling. Another man was hit by a piece of a bomb thrown from an aeroplane. He got a small wound on the buttocks, and was paralysed from the waist downwards. Two cases required amputations —they arrived in a terrible condition, the dressings not having been touched for days. It was interesting to listen to their accounts of the fighting. There is universal belief in the efficiency of the German artillery, but our Tommies have a supreme contempt for the infantry. The terrible losses of the past few weeks are beginning to tell on the Germans. The infantry advance

in close formation and fire a volley from the hip when about one hundred yards off. Then our boys begin to charge with "Rosalie," and the sight of cold steel is too much for the Huns, who turn and run. Every man told the same tale. On the whole our wounded are being well treated. One soldier had been wounded and captured by the Germans, and propped up with German wounded by a hayrick. The fighting got more vigorous, and their guard ran away, leaving them all free. The French are fighting very well, and they take no prisoners. I believe the Turcos are the limit—they kill wounded as well. Many of our officers who have been in Gurkha regiments say the Gurkha doesn't know what the white flag means. Apparently all sides are disregarding the white flag, for there have been many instances of German treachery regarding its use.

Last Saturday the King reviewed the battalions stationed here. It was a brilliant day, and the boys did look well. They have been training very hard, and all were keen to see the King. He was accompanied by the Queen, Princess Mary, and Kitchener. They walked along the front line, and then got into motors and drove off. The boys were very disappointed, for most of them only saw the Queen's parasol. While the King certainly had a lot to do, we had hoped that he would have ridden down all the ranks. The men have worked hard, they wanted to see their King—and all the majority got was two hours on the parade ground. Kitchener was in good form. The War Office is no sinecure, and nobody

else would have got so much done in the time. Yesterday I had a busy time making up monthly returns, which seem to be devised to torment unfortunate regimental doctors. They are bad enough in peace, but with things all upside down they are much worse. It was harder also when one had no previous experience, but I managed to get mine pretty accurate.

I may get away before the troops, but I am not too sanguine; I rather expect that they will keep me here. I am now up to all the duties. I shall soon ask if I can go on. While this "panel practice" is pleasant, I want to be doing more exciting and interesting work. I am glad that I was not attached to a hospital here; the regimental life is much more interesting.

◈ ✠ ◈

8/10/14.

I AM slowly getting the inoculations done. This Battalion is by no means the best in the camp. I have discharged more unfit, and have a bigger sick parade each day than the other men. There are also more men refusing inoculation than one would like. I am getting rather tired of persuading them. The Anti-vivisection and Vaccination Society have been distributing leaflets to the men with alarming statements re the bad effects of it. If we could catch the ruffian who is doing it we would make it hot for him. I explained things to the men, and many were then done. The objectors are largely old soldiers, also young fellows who

are funked by the yarns the former tell them, and others who object to any preventative schemes. Some of my constant attenders at sick parade were among them.

This week I had an additional job—getting lousy men clean. The hospital refused to treat them, or to give me sulphur. So I just got them all stripped, and put them in a bath with carbolic in it. Meanwhile I got their clothes in the oven, and turned on the steam at about 100 lbs. pressure. This soon did for the little beggars. Then into the baking oven to dry. The blankets and mattresses were fumigated with sulphur. By these means I eradicated a nasty disease. If any man now turns up infected he will be punished.

Yesterday an R.A.M.C. Major inspected what we had done. He also asked if we wanted to stay with the regiment or go on soon to the front. I choose the latter, and I shall make a personal application to-morrow. It would be pleasant to stay here with the men, and go on in the spring under good weather conditions. Winter will soon set in, and I may go to some forsaken spot in France, and be under very hard conditions. But I feel I should go, and I want to. My French and German should be of great use to me. Probably this may be the last long letter from me for sometime—one never knows.

The Aisne battle is still dragging on—some of our senior officers are rather pessimistic about the result. I believe the centre trenches are only one hundred yards apart, and the men on both sides are dead beat.

THE SEND OFF.

Southampton, 9/10/14.

JUST a few lines before we go aboard. I had only two hours' notice yesterday. There was a terrible bustle. The officers in my mess were kind enough to say how sorry they were to lose me. When I left the Colonel did me the honour of asking all to give me three cheers. I appreciated it very much, and I know what their kindness did to me, and how it helped me in my work.

Then down to the station—no bands—no cheering crowds—just on to the train and off. I am not going light hearted, nor am I funked. But this Continental trip is something different from any of my others. It will be no picnic—I shall probably have a tremendous amount to do—but I feel that I shall be able to do it. As a grim reminder I have my identification disc round my neck.

Our little party promises good—two of the men are Irish, and the others a Canadian, an Englishman, and an Australian. So we represent the Empire pretty well.

◈ ⊞ ◈

15/10/14.

WE stayed a couple of days on the French coast waiting orders, and got a further insight into war conditions. Would that those at home could see them—then they would wake up. Here we got our baptism of fire. Away in the distance we heard

guns. An aeroplane (a taube) sailed over us, and as we watched it three loud explosions were heard, and black smoke rose in columns. The nearest bomb landed about two hundred yards from us. One hit an engine and blew out the side, another made a hole in a garden, and the third landed in water. Soon guns were going off, and one of our aviators started in pursuit, but the taube got away. Another one was shot down.

The most interesting part of the voyage has been what we saw of military and naval precautions and movements. Naturally we must say nothing about these. I think we will settle down and form a very happy mess. We have a fine man in charge. Each of us is put in charge of something. I am the interpreter for the party, and I am attached to our Chief to help him in general work. I shall probably lend a hand to anybody when there is a rush on. The other day I was sent to interview the Commandant, and saw a bit behind the scenes. We have had a good reception from the people. They do all they can for one, and often give things for which they will not accept payment. When we landed, tea, cigarettes, and chocolates were given free to the men.

◈ ◈ ◈

5/11/14.

I AM sorry there has been such a delay since last letter, but I have been so hard at it that I could not write. Now there is a lull at the Front, and I am freer.

We stayed four days in camp, and spent the time drilling and looking out for a site. Eventually we got a fine hotel on the coast. The position is superb, and on a clear day we see the white cliffs of England. Though not far from the front we still seem near home. The day we arrived was strenuous. Up at 5 a.m., and marched here. Then the hotel had to be cleared out, and fitted up. At first I was in charge of unloading at the station. When that was finished I got to work shifting furniture. At midnight we were all dead beat, and rested till the morning. We then finished off, and the car loads of wounded soon came in. The Major appointed me chief surgeon, and made me responsible for all surgical work. Three of us did the major operations, and we were soon busy. I cannot give you details of numbers, but we were soon doing double our supposed number. We began without nurses, but had to apply for them. It was no joke acting as sister as well as surgeon.

Our arrival coincided with the commencement of the big fight for Calais, now going in our favour. With the increasing work we began to be more a general hospital than a stationary, and certain changes were inevitable. A general hospital has five hundred beds, and a stationary one two hundred. The big hospitals must have at least one F.R.C.S. on the staff. As we had none we were soon sent one, and I then worked under him. There are also consulting surgeons appointed to supervise all the hospitals. These are big men from London with the rank of Colonel.

The writer here mentions a very pleasing experience he had with one of these big men, and then goes on—"I am doing my best, working nearly eighteen hours a day at full speed. I have not been outside for over twelve days. This is no picnic, but I am in fine fettle. It does help one to know his superiors are with him, and appreciate his efforts. Everything is new, the wounds quite different and terrible, but above all towers the cheery stoicism of the Tommies. They never complain. I have had chances of speaking German to the wounded, and it cheered them up, to get someone who could talk fluently to them.

◆ ◘ ◈

9/11/14.

IF I get moved to the firing line I shall let you know by cable. This, however, is unlikely, as my chief won't let me go. It is gratifying to know one is of some use. He has also done me the honour of allowing my letters to pass uncensored. I should like to write freely, but I must not.

Yesterday we got an R.A.M.C. man from the front. They have a pretty rough time of it, little better than the troops as regards danger. The Germans shell every main road, dropping shells at intervals all along it. They want to dislocate the transport service and naturally the ambulance waggons come in for a share also. No wounded can be shifted from the trenches in the day time. At night the doctors go up, and often are fired on. Our artillery has been doing grand work recently. There

are a couple of armoured trains with 9.2 naval guns aboard. One of these put three "Jack Johnsons" out of action in seven shots, at a range of seven miles.

We have just got news of the sinking of the "Emden," and naturally I feel very proud that the Australian Navy was in at the death.

Things are slowly progressing and those in the know seem to be optimistic.

Now for a description of our daily life. I believe that folks at home have had all sorts of tales about the poor treatment, and even worse of our sick. As far as I have seen, that is all bunkum. The British R.A.M.C. is really marvellously organised. The war is an abnormal one, so there will be mistakes made. But taking all in all our arrangements are as perfect as possible, and infinitely better than the French.

When a man is wounded in the trenches he lies there all day. His regimental doctor gives him first aid if he is there on the spot, otherwise at night. Parties then come up from the clearing hospital and remove the cases. These hospitals renew dressings if necessary, and classify all the men. Only very urgent cases are operated on by them. Then the wounded leave by motor transport to the nearest station, or are put straight on the hospital trains. These are staffed by doctors and nurses, and run to Boulogne. Here the wounded are

distributed to the various general and stationary hospitals. Considering the fierce fighting and the constant shelling of main roads it is a wonder the wounded ever get here. I must say the men at the front do their work exceedingly well. When they arrive here we classify them further, put them to bed, and give them a hot drink. Then any dressings are renewed. We see the extent of the injury. We only keep serious cases on here. The others are marked—cot, berth, or sitting up (for home)—or convalescent camp, if they are fit to return within three weeks.

My wards are in the restaurant of the hotel, and have plenty of windows. High tide is only a few feet off, and the view is superb. We have the best sisters, and we pride ourselves on our wards. Our hospital has a great reputation, and we are trying to live up to it. The Major is a splendid organiser—always hard at it, and never sparing himself—he inspires us. Recently we got a lot of Canadian nurses who were waiting for the Canadians to come over. They are dressed in military uniform, and wear badges of rank. They quite put ours in the shade. They are very capable.

◈ ⊞ ◈

11/11/14.

THE work here is something quite new and strange to all the medical staff. The wounds are terrible. A clean bullet wound is all right and heals quickly, but shrapnel makes a terrible mess. Then we have lockjaw or Tetanus, ever ready to give the unfortunate

a most painful end. The great ally we have here is the sea air—it simply works wonders.

Apart from actual work, I find that my German is of great use. A few words with the German wounded cheers them up—they like to speak to anyone who understands them. I have just been talking to a Landwehr or reserve man of forty. He was only four days at the front, but he saw enough. He told me that Germany is fast coming to the end of her men; he also stated that the young men run off at the sound and results of the heavy firing. Behind them are stationed troops who shot them He had seen these sights frequently.

All the Germans we have had have been very decent, and they were profoundly grateful for the attention they got. Our soldiers did what they could for them—there is no animostiy between the wounded. One man though badly hurt in one arm, goes round all the beds helping others. They are eager to do anything. A few days ago I had an amusing yarn with two Connaught Rangers. They spoke in the soft Irish of the west and of course I pass as an Irishman always. One day a pig wandered in front of the trenches, and the Irish feelings were aroused—"What a fine fellow he was! Wouldn't he go well with a few heads of cabbage." He didn't wander about much longer.

Another night two men strayed out of the trenches and began to milk a cow. They were seen dimly, and

fired on as Germans. Luckily they escaped, but the cow was killed. Next morning the same lads got out and secured a good steak.

I think the worst cases we see are those due to severe mental shock. Cases of fathers who have seen their sons killed, or brothers, or in some instances being the only man alive in a trench after a shell has burst. Their condition is really pitiable. This war will leave lasting impressions. Men do not forget in a hurry the piles of German dead, or their own. I do not want to be lugubrious, but one sees the awful reality here. Personally I am very fit; the sea air agrees with me, also plenty of work.

◈ ⊞ ◈

18/11/14.

I HAVE not had so much to do lately, and my cases, which were serious, are getting on well. So when the Major said to-night that I was to get thirty-six more beds I felt rather pleased. I am at it all day long, with only a walk on the beach to brace up. The way we are fed is one of our triumphs. It is most instructive to see the huge stores at our base in Boulogne, and the way they are handled. The troops feed on the best of everything—magnificent bacon and cheese, jam galore, and bread better than any I have ever tasted. In the hospital we get fresh milk, eggs, and chickens from Folkestone. Those in the firing line are equally well looked after. The lorries run up every night as far as they dare, and transfer stores to those waiting. Everything seems to go by clockwork. The Government have

seen the benefit of feeding up the troops. There is an enormous quantity of jam consumed—Tommy has a sweet tooth, and gets the best.

◈ ⊞ ◈

5/12/14.

OUR forces are resting, and not in the trenches just now. We only get medical cases, and this means a reduction in our surgical staff. I am again trying to get to the firing line. The weather has been extremely bad—high gales, with rain, hail, and cold.

◈ ⊞ ◈

12/12/14.

I THINK of you all enjoying the sun. Here we have a bleak landscape, with bare trees, the sky cloudy, and a piercing wind blowing. Occasionally a very watery sun tries for a few minutes to break through. The roads are quagmires, and walking is not a treat. You can imagine what it is like in the trenches. I have now got rid of all my fracture cases. When they went aboard ship the P.M.O. came out and said he was extremely pleased with the way we had fixed them up. So once more our hospital takes a high place. The War Office also gave us a pat on the back. I had a German prisoner, who was wounded. He wrote home to his people, and his father sent a letter to the War Office, thanking them for the kindness shown. He also asked them to convey his thanks to us. The letter was a very fine one, and the War Office was pleased to get such evidence from the enemy. I wish they would publish it, just to refute a few of the wireless lies sent all over

the world. All the wounded are treated alike, irrespective of nationality, and they share all the extras. Before he left this same boy gave me a shoulder strap with his regimental number as a gift.

◈ ⊞ ◈

27/12/14.

I AM still waiting my call. Christmas weather was splendid—bright sun and clear sky. We had no elaborate celebrations, but each ward was decorated, and we gave our patients a stocking full of odds and ends. We each got gifts from the Royal family. The King and Queen sent a card with their photos and a message. The gift of the Princess Mary was a handsome brass box containing a pipe, tobacco, and cigarettes. The lid had her profile—1914—and the names of the Allies. On Christmas day we got a piano up two stories, and had a sing song of five hours. The men joined in willingly, and some of them were very good. The weather has again broken—cold and incessant rain.

◈ ⊞ ◈

3/1/15.

STILL at Boulogne, and very quiet. The opposing forces are playing a stalemate, and with the present awful weather conditions are likely to do so for some time. We are getting practically only medical cases—rheumatism and allied troubles.

UNDER ORDERS.

8/1/15.

THE call has come, and I am leaving at midnight with my kit, a day's rations, and water bottle full, for an unknown destination. I have to report to the A.D.M.S., Lahore Division, consisting of British troops from India.

◈ ⊞ ◈

14/1/15.

I AM now in a field ambulance, and my ambition is gratified. Leaving at midnight I reached my destination in the morning. I then changed into a motor transport, and was soon rushing along those straight roads of France. Troops of all kinds passed us —Lancers, Sikhs, Gurkhas, and British. It was with difficulty I reached the Chateau, and reported. The ambulance is resting in a small mining village, resembling Lanarkshire in dreariness and slagheaps. It is raining, and one walks about in mud ankle deep. All the senior officers are from India. Our stretcher bearers are Indians, and the Senior Warrant Officers are Eurasians. Yesterday I was on a court-martial. Three languages were used—English, French, and Hindustani. It was a wearisome case, but it showed me how careful they are in the Army. To-morrow we leave for a new post, and begin work. I hope to add Hindustani to my other languages.

20/1/15.

SINCE last writing I have been right into it. My letters from now on will have to be more discreet than ever, but I have my diary, and that holds everything. Five days ago we made a trek of 15 miles to our present base. The roads were vile, and we got bespattered with mud. These roads are paved with setts in the middle and the sides are left alone—woe betide any transport which gets to one side. One of our carts did so, and sank up to the axle immediately. The country is absolutely flat, with clumps of woods and tall poplars lining the roads. It is water logged, and water lies over many fields. In fact, many roads are under it also. With all the transport going on, especially motors, you can imagine what a time we have on foot. We passed through several villages which had been shelled.

An interruption of two days has been caused by the Boches shelling my dressing station, and I had to clear out yesterday. Luckily I had no casualties. All along the road we saw the reserve trenches half full of water. There were also graves of soldiers of various nationalities, each with a plain cross, and often a cap hanging on it. Finally we reached our billets, in a brewery. This village had been shelled by us, and the church destroyed, in driving out the Germans. The tower was still standing, but the roof was gone, and the stained windows all shattered. Near by was a 4.7 gun, which made a terrific noise when it went off. The following day I was sent by myself with one section to open an advance

dressing station at a village about one and a-half miles behind the trenches. It had been vigorously shelled several times, and was in a very dilapidated condition. Houses were roofless, cut in two, or with one end blown off, but it was curious how many were spared and others destroyed.

My first post was in a fine house in rather an exposed position. We had funk holes, or dug outs behind for emergency use. At night we had to block up all windows in order to prevent our lights from being seen. My job was to go out at night to the regimental aid post, and remove the wounded. An aid post is where the regimental doctor is, and to where his stretcher bearers bring the wounded from the trenches. It is supposed to be out of range of fire, if possible—mine wasn't.

All the country here is very flat, with practically no cover. I took my waggons up as far as I could, and then left them in a safe spot. We had then to skirt a big quadrilateral. At one corner a sniper was reported to have his gun trained, but he hasn't got us up to date. We then had a run of about 400 yards dead in the open, and this was dangerous. The trenches were only 100 yards in front of the aid post. They tended to converge at an angle, and I got the fire from both sides. Bullets whizzed over in great style, and at first I ducked at every one. Matters were not improved by the searchlight, which winked at us frequently. Magnesium lights are used. These are fired from a pistol, and give a very

brilliant light, lasting about twenty seconds, lighting up the country for miles. When a light goes up we crouch down so as not to give the sniper too obvious a target. On the second night both sides began to shell when I was on that road. A big shell is a fearsome thing. It makes a terrific roar as it goes past, but one always thinks it is coming straight for him. Two days ago I went down by daylight to the aid post on business, and had a narrow escape. Just as I got in the door a shrapnel shell burst where I had been standing. You may believe it gave me the jumps. They then hit the house, and shelled the road systematically. My progress back was also hastened by more shrapnel. Bursting shrapnel gives a good scenic impression, and it leaves a fine fleecy cloud. Yesterday morning, as I was attending to some sick men, a shell burst outside my door and made a hole in the footpath, then another landed on the roof, and this decided me to clear out. I galloped into headquarters for instructions, and returned and got all my sick away in safety. The Germans sent a lot of shrapnel into the town that day, and most of it fell round my place. Being shelled out is not a comfortable experience. I had to leave my first place because it was wanted to make a fort. All round the town were batteries, and where I went to was a bad spot—next the church, but it was all I could get. As already mentioned, I soon got shifted out of that, and now I am in another village, also next a church. We have had a choice selection of weather lately—snow and rain, but to-day is fine, and freezing hard. The roads I go down are all under water

about six inches deep. When you are not in water you squelch through mud. I have not had my clothes off for a week. My boots are a sight. I sleep on stone floors in any old spot, and am quite fit. The shells certainly make one sit up, and I have a wholesome respect for them. Up to date no "Jack Johnsons" have come my way, but one never knows.

◈ ⊡ ◈

28/1/15.

AFTER getting out of that old village where I had been shelled I went to another one, about two miles away. Nothing happened there, but on my last night out collecting I had a narrow shave. It was moonlight, and I was returning from the aid post with my wounded. As usual, I was in front (as we always go), and no firing was going on. Suddenly a shot rang out, and the bullet hit the ground beside me. A cowardly sniper was at work, knowing full well that an R.A.M.C. officer was leading. He could see who we were, and it made me very angry. I wouldn't have minded so much if I could have hit back, but it is all in the game, and one can only be thankful they were not winged. I had a strenuous week, and was not sorry when we came back to our old quarters for a rest. I saw all I wanted to, and got some sensations thrown in. Once we begin to move forward it will be quite different. At present I have a fixed spot to evacuate the wounded, later on it will be several places. The trenches simply zigzag across level fields. They don't form a straight line, but are always irregular. Behind these again are the reserve

trenches, and about 15 yards in front are the barbed wire entanglements. Everywhere are telephone wires attached to trees or stakes, or lying on the ground. Batteries are in farm houses, about three or four miles from the trenches. They are shielded by various methods from the aeroplanes. I began in wet weather; then it snowed, and finally we got a dry spell. Immediately up went the aeroplanes on both sides. The prettiest sight I have yet seen was one of our anti-aircraft guns firing shrapnel at a Taube. You would see the white puff, and then hear the bang. They fired twenty-two shots at one, and never got it. The Taube sailed serenely on, with bursting shrapnel on all sides. These aeroplanes are the very devil—for smoke bombs were dropped, and soon the shells came over. I am glad to be able to tell you that the guns which shelled me out of ——— were silenced that day by our men. The observer lies hidden with a telephone near the trenches and observes the hit. At night one sees fixed lights in cottages. These give the directions for our guns, if they have to fire. In one village where I was, there was also "Little Willie"—a 4.7in. gun. When "Little Willie" went off, so did the tiles of the houses—the glass panes had gone long ago. When a 6-inch fires you feel the concussion at least a mile off. After coming back one missed the constant crack of rifles and the rat-a-tat of the maxims. Heavy gun fire doesn't disturb me in the least. It is curious how quickly one becomes accustomed to roughing it. I slept all that week on stone or wooden floors. I found my boots made a good pillow. A bed was a luxury I

never saw. The windows had no glass, and I ate what I could get by candle light. I did not do at all badly on my rations and a few extras. One's feelings when going into fire for the first time are mixed. I was frightened, of course, but just kept straight on. If I had been alone I would probably have run, but I was leading Indians, and I couldn't show any hesitation. I will certainly take care of my fellows, and no matter what comes I shall lead, and not do the German method. On one night only just before an attack I was undecided whether I would go down a certain road. That feeling soon wore off, and I went along heedless of the bullets, but I have not yet had enough shells to enable me to laugh at them. Opposite to where I was were Saxon troops. One must admire the way in which the Germans looked after their trenches. They boarded the floors, and had engines to pump the water out. In my line of trenches the water was three feet deep. You can imagine what it must be like in this climate. The men came out slime up to their necks. Most men smear vaseline over themselves before dressing, but the water gets through. Conditions have changed considerably since the first months. Then we had no reserves, and the men had to stay weeks in the trenches, without relief—now there is a very good scheme of short spells of work, and then rest. That is why we are now out of the firing line. At present I am in charge of the baths, and have to bathe and disinfect the whole brigade. It is all day long in an atmosphere of vermin and steam. I am enjoying variety.

VARIED EXPERIENCES.

3/2/15.

THE week has been quiet, as we are resting, but we have had two changes of billets. I had my time full with the bathing. We took over the baths of a local mining company. There were eighty-six cubicles, each with a shower bath of hot water. While the men were bathing we disinfected their clothes in a steam sterilizer outside. It was a strenuous time for me, as I had seven hours a day in an atmosphere of steam. I saw all types of Indians. The amount of clothing they have is enormous. Gifts have been showered on them till they did not know what to do with them. Each man wore as much as possible. They dress themselves very slowly, and won't be hurried. All native Indians have one trait in common—they will never completely strip in the presence of others. A couple of days ago I rode about 35 miles, mostly in a snow storm, to secure new billeting quarters. After I came back the C.O. told me that the Brigade Staff Captain told him that I was coming on at billeting—in fact, he had great difficulty in riding me off the best spots. Here we struck the worst billets we have yet been in. The country is depressingly dreary and waterlogged. We were in poor farms; three of us slept in a room full of potatoes, but these things don't worry me now. To-day we moved into better billets in a small village near by. To-morrow we have to be ready to move at two hours' notice, back to the firing line—once more to the magnesium flares and the guns.

OH, FOR A QUEENSLAND DAY!

I have been watching our men practising with the rifle grenade and bombs. Grenade warfare has revived many old methods, and grenade throwing has become a fine art. Each company has its bomb throwers; these go in front and throw their bombs, and the rest follow with the bayonets.

◈ ⊡ ◈ 6/2/15.

I HAVE been transferred for a week to a famous regiment—the Connaught Rangers—while their doctor goes on leave. We go up to the trenches in a couple of days, and I am expecting some new experience. My duty is to sit all day in my aid post, just behind the trenches, and fix up the men. If we go back to the old spot I shall be at the bottom of that road, and some one else will have the pleasure of sprinting down to me. The dangers are increased in my new post, but one does not care, and I am not going to recklessly expose myself. I believe a big battle will be fought when we are up this time, and that will mean some strenuous work ahead of me. Just now I am sitting in a poor farmhouse. My room is small and cold and damp. I have my coat and muffler and Balaclava cap on, and yet I feel cold. Oh, for a Queensland summer day, just to warm up! It is good to get back to the Irish accent again. I understand them, and that makes a lot of difference. My servant is a simple soul of the West. He solemnly told me yesterday that, in his opinion, the war would not be over until peace is signed. Another man gave a very good definition of a trench periscope—"A thing you look in here, and see there."

As our billets are very scattered, I mess along with the priest—Father Perle—a very lovable old man. He is very tolerant, and of such a fine character that one instinctively likes him. To-morrow he is going to give the men Communion, before we go up. He told me many tales of battles in which this fine regiment has been decimated; receiving the blessing on the battlefield before they dashed forward and upheld the name of their regiment.

In this war the Connaughts in particular have added to their glorious history. They came out here with 900 men, and were reduced at one time to 300. The present battalion is made up of the remnants of four, and this is not uncommon.

Yesterday a Taube cruised over us, and dropped, not bombs, but leaflets. They apparently thought we were French. I enclose one as a souvenir. How futile the methods are? The leaflet was printed in French, and translated, reads:—

"FRENCH SOLDIERS.

"The opinion widely circulated in your ranks that "French prisoners are shot by the Germans is not true. "On the contrary, they are absolutely well treated by "the Germans."

The artillery has been hard at it to-day, and my windows have been rattling with the concussion, though the guns are some distance.

MEDICAL TREATMENT.

Replying to questions in correspondence (See Page 17.)

"Re your remarks on Tetanus: We are not seeing so much of it now, as at the Aisne, when we were on highly cultivated soil. You are correct about its main characteristics. The organism stays in the wound, and the poison alone circulates. It shows a peculiar attraction for the brain and spinal chord, and this, of course, makes its treatment more difficult. As a prophylactic the serum is of undoubted value, but it is a matter of dispute if it has any remedial effect after convulsions have started. Personally I have grave doubts, and I know this is the opinion of those who have seen a lot of cases. We give prophylactic injections to all cases with wounds of the extremities, whether one dose is sufficient, and whether it has really stopped the onset of the trouble, is a debatable point. All these points are being worked out by skilled laboratory men here. I can, however, tell you of the positive advantages of typhoid inoculation. All these cases go to my old base hospital at Boulogne. So far there have been 250 cases in the whole Expeditionary Force, and 85 per cent of these have occurred in non-inoculated cases. The majority of the others are those with doubtful histories of inoculation, or only one dose. Among those who have been inoculated, and have contracted the disease, no deaths have occurred. These results have not yet been published, but they are authentic. Personally I have had no time for research. My work is that of the clinician, and up here I only do first

aid work. My duty is to evacuate the wounded as soon as possible, and to make them comfortable. Still, during my time at the base, I got a good insight into the treatment of cases, and I know the value of rival treatments.

◈ ⊞ ◈

12/2/15.

I am again up in the firing line. We left our resting place early one morning, and trudged across country in the usual mud of varying density. I shall never complain again about any place after this war. We pitched our tents at a small village, where I had been previously. The billeting officer greeted me with the following cheery remarks:—" Sorry old man, but a shell dropped on your billet a couple of days ago, and killed a few people." I just smiled—one usually finds that once a shell lands on a given point it is safe to go there for some time afterwards. I went to the house and found the courtyard spattered with blood, and a big hole caused by a "Jack Johnson." It was a stray shell which apparently had fallen short. The effect of the explosion was rather curious. On one side of the house, which was built round a hollow square, all the windows had been blown in, and also the doors. Everything was in confusion in the rooms, and splinters of glass six inches long were sticking fast into the walls. The walls themselves and the ceiling were perforated. I got the mess cleared up, and soon made a snug corner, though a trifle airy. There was a wireless installation in the house, and I was

rather suspicious about it. While here the men going into the trenches were issued rubber boots, and whale oil was served out. Frost bite, or something very much akin to it, has been a great trouble all winter. Both French and British medical authorities are agreed that it is not true frost bite. It is due to boots and putties being left on for long periods. The putties get wet and shrink a bit, and contract the legs, interfering with the blood supply to the toes. As a result of this deprivation of blood, a condition of semi-gangrene sets in. To avoid it, we endeavour to get the men take off their boots at least once a day, and rub their feet. Whale oil is now being issued, and I do not know exactly why it has been chosen. It is a very heavy oil, and is poured into the boot and allowed to work into the foot through the socks. I swopped my rubber boots for a bigger pair, and the further history of my old pair was rather tragic. During the afternoon a battery of 4.7-inch guns began playing the good old game of "dogging the rabbit"—gunner slang for shelling a position to drive the enemy out, and then catching him as he runs back. The noise was deafening. The following day was wet, and very cheerless. We set out at 4.30 p.m. for the trenches. It had stopped raining, and the sunset was visible. We were 900 strong, and stretched over a good long piece of road. As we got near our objective the enemy began to shell us. I have got inured to bullets, but shells do make me funked, as I freely admit. It is not a nice sensation to hear the whistle as they pass over one's head, and the more gurgly sound as they dropped near the end. Luckily all the



"A YOUNG QUEENSLANDER"

One of the Stations in the fighting line.

shells fell just behind us. I found that my aid post was a deserted farm house, well down the road to the trenches, in fact, the last house. It was very comfortable, and we had plenty of room. There was only one part damaged, and the big hole in the road just to remind one that such things had come over. We soon got it into ship-shape condition, and were ready for action. The trenches are about 1,000 yards away, and this is a quiet spot compared with where I last was. I heard lately that the latter place was now abandoned, for the Germans had shelled it severely, and knocked the roof off. This is a haven of rest compared to it, though it is a wonder they haven't stirred us up more.

The last few days have been very clear, and aeroplanes have been busy. We all get under cover when one comes over, then we watch the anti-aircraft guns at work. It is very noticeable how complete an ascendency we have over the Germans, as regards aeroplanes. No Taubes have been here for months, but we have had aviatiks (biplanes). Only one has gone up recently, and two of ours soon settled him, and made him retreat. It was fascinating to watch our one circle round and round, with German shrapnel bursting and going right into it quite unconcerned. The German shell breaks with a much louder report than ours, and the smoke is very dense and woolly, hence the name given by our men to those shells—"Woolly Bears."

Just as we are ahead of them in that line, so we are with artillery. This spot is a fair inferno of noise every

afternoon, with 18-pounders and 6-inch Howitzers blazing off, and we get very few replies. Either the big guns are gone or else they have to husband their ammunition more nowadays. What a curious life it is here, and how one gets so used to it, and just walks about heedless of the shells. It is difficult to give you a picture of the actual front. Just a stretch of flat country, intersected by trees and ruined houses. About half a mile away is a ruin and some battered houses—there are the reserves, and in front of them the trenches. One hundred and fifty yards in front of them are the Germans. Between is a sea of mud. Anybody trying to cross that must go step by step through the mud, and you can understand what slaughter the opposite side would make during any such attack. That is why we do not advance at present. We must just sit tight, and wait, and you at home read the papers, and say there is nothing in them. That is true regarding large movements, but every day the artillery is at work, and so are the rifles and snipers, and each evening we have our share of killed and wounded. Nothing more dismal and depressing could be imagined than this black country of France. We must stay in cold rooms all day, as we cannot have smoke issuing out of the chimneys. At night we warm up.

The most impressive sight I have seen recently was the burial of three of our men, one of whom came in wearing the boots I had discarded—a young fellow who tried to find out what the enemy were doing in this direction, and who paid the penalty. We covered their

heads, and then each was carried up the road on a stretcher. Their bodies were quite exposed—each in his mud-stained uniform, and his hands stiff in rigor mortis. There was a small cemetery along the road, a new one with only wooden crosses, but already too large. There on a dull and cold winter afternoon they were quietly laid to rest—never to return to the Emerald Isle.

At night everything is inky black. One hears the challenge of sentries and the answers. Flares go up from the trenches and light up the country with a ghostly bluish-white light, throwing into relief the dark outline of farm houses. Crack, crack go the rifles, and the rapid staccato stutter of the maxims occasionally is heard. Parties of men walk past in the gloom, going down or returning from digging trenches, or relieving those in them, and sometimes stretcher bearers bring up wounded to me. Now and then a vivid flash, and then the roar tells of big guns firing. True it is a weird and unnatural existence, but somehow one seems to have been always at it. This slow waiting game has no glories, but some time soon we shall begin, and then the medical staff will be overworked. We all believe the end will come sooner than we expect, and we live in that hope.

◈ ⊞ ◈

18/2/15.

I TOLD you in my last about our guns bombarding the enemy vigorously, but eliciting practically no reply. One would sit all day in the post, or wander up and down the road with impunity. However,

one afternoon we stirred them up in earnest. They got the range of our battery, causing them the most trouble and let it have a good dose. Shells whistled over us but we did not mind. Later on I heard that all our transport had to be shifted to a safer spot. Then they began to search backwards, dropping shells shorter each time. That was where we came in! As usual, the medico got right in the way of it. Shells dropped all around us, and knocked haystacks sky high. I thought it was rather warm in my room and came outside. As I did a shell landed on the roof of the billet opposite my window, went through, and did not burst, until it reached the wall, which was blown clean out. The men were mostly outside watching the "fun," and they were covered in debris. Three men were knocked out. By this time things were decidedly sultry. We had no funk hole, and had just to crouch against the wall, and pray to God the next one did not land on us. It was a terrorising twenty minutes, and one which I shall take a long time to forget. We did not just hear the whistle of a passing shell, but heard them coming, then the swishing sound as they drop, and then bang. High explosive percussion shrapnel was being used. I admit straight away that I was very funked, still I managed to watch how the average Tommy behaved. Thomas Atkins is a marvel in many ways. He absolutely disregards bullets, and does not seem to care greatly about shells. However, he does not like bombs. The men round me always ran out to see where a shell burst. When one has nothing to do, just sheltering from shells is not

pleasant, to put it mildly, but when you have a job on, such as dressing wounds, you do not mind nearly so much.

The following day I returned to the ambulance. Once more I have been asked by the Senior Medical Officer in charge of the division to take a regular commission. This time he definitely stated that these commissions were being offered to a few specially selected temporary men. While I greatly appreciate the honour he did me in including my name in that list, I refused again. The men here are keen for me to join, but the life does not offer any permanent attraction. I think you will share with me the pleasure of knowing that my work has met with official approval. I certainly am getting a variety of jobs. This time I have been in charge of the transport and Indian personnel. I did not fancy myself as a vet, but I get along as well as I can. Our natives have been very hard workers all along, and have done extremely good work under fire. There has been some slackness amongst only a few of them, and this has been checked by giving these few a good whipping. That appeals more to them than hard labour.

Yesterday I was run into a new and yet old job. I am supposed to have "a bit of a way with me" regarding an Irish accent, and also able to persuade people to do things they do not want to do. The captain of a neighbouring battery had 20 men to be inoculated, and only six were willing. He came over for advice, and

told us that the men were all London bus drivers, and the ringleader a regular Hyde Park orator. The Acting O.C. promptly deputed me to try and talk them round, and meet them in debate. At first the gunner man did not want to include the orator, as he thought the latter would be too much for me. However, I said, "Let 'em all come." As you know, I had some experience with this type of ignorant objectors at Aldershot. So we met, and I talked simply to them, and told them about it, and what I had seen in Boulogne, where we had all the cases.

I reminded them about the water supply here, and the awful "middens." Then I asked them to put any questions they had. The orator was soon at work, and quoted a case of death after injection, but I had read about that case, and was ready for him. Eventually I got them all done, including the orator, and my O.C. and the other one were very pleased with the result. The Germans have been very busy the last few days, bombarding our lines. The town I was in at first, and from which I had to beat a hurried retreat, has got it badly. It wasn't much to look at then, but now many more homes have been hit. Several big ones have been absolutely blown to pieces. I was up there to-day, and a couple of shells whizzed over. It is remarkable how many German shells are "blind"—i.e., do not explode. Recently at least 40 per cent of their shells have not burst. This seems to point to deterioration in their manufacture.

NO MAN'S LAND.

27/2/15.

OUR weather is slowly improving. The days are brighter, though recently we have had snow. But the country is absolutely waterlogged. You strike water one foot down. It is indescribably dreary and depressing. We live in an atmosphere of "middens." When up at the front we came round them, and then back we go to rows of smelly villages. However, the summer will be much worse. One often wonders what will happen if the lines do not move by the spring. At present decomposing bodies lie in no-man's land between the trenches, and have lain there since November. The men in the trenches can hardly dig now for disturbing corpses. They drained, or rather dragged a certain trench near where we were recently (rather unwisely, I think) and they fished up numbers of dead bodies of officers and men posted as missing. There is no pleasant thing in war, just horror after horror. In one village where we had very large fighting, there are thousands of dead buried, and many still above ground. That place should be razed entirely.

Referring to the composition of the Indian forces, the writer states:—

Each brigade consists of four regiments, two British and two native. I am in the ambulance attached to the British section. All our personnel are natives, but we do not treat natives. They are looked after by the Indian Medical Service men. Of course all our

officers speak Hindustani. Our men are not high caste, and the weather has been very hard on them, but they have worked well. We left our advance station on the 24th. For some days before, the remains of the village where I first had to leave were heavily shelled. I went up one afternoon on an urgent message to collect some cases. We got there at 5 p.m., just when shelling usually is on. No sooner there than the familiar whistle was heard, and a shell landed near us. I seem to attract any fire that is going. However, no more came over, and I was able to inspect my old and first village. This is so near the trenches that no inhabitants are left, and in fact few troops are now billeted there. The church had a few more holes in it. My dressing station also had a big hole just where my room was, but I was surprised to find that a big house opposite was now represented by a few bricks. It certainly was an object lesson as to what high explosives can do. Curiously, certain parts of the village were never hit. Shells seem to have a limited zone of action, and, needless to say, the centre of that zone was a church.

I was very amused one morning to watch a new "terrier" regiment, when our old friend, the 6-inch Howitzer went off. They ran in all directions, as they thought it was a shell bursting. We had considered that this place was beyond their range, but one night an 11-inch one wandered over, and fell about 50 yards from the hospital. Luckily it did not explode.

AS LAUNDRYMAN.

2/3/15.

THE following day I resumed my old post as billeting officer, and rode about 22 miles in all to our new area. I enjoyed the exercise, though I was very stiff, one gets so little chance of decent exercise. When up at the trenches one, of course, gets none. Back here it is not much better, for the roads are blocked by motor traffic, and the country is not very inviting. The day began fairly well, then it snowed very heavily, and finally sleet. In all one could not have been much more uncomfortable. We all arrived very tired and out of temper, and the poor billets did not improve matters. The next morning was snowing, and then fine. As usual the period of resting was to be for me one of hard work, much more so than when further up. The Division arranged a beautiful scheme on paper, and left me to carry it out. I suppose I should take it as a compliment that while the other brigades have appointed Majors, and, of course, regulars, to look after the baths, I was given charge of my brigade. We searched everywhere for a suitable spot, and found none. The village was crammed full of troops, and there was no central spot for bathing. Eventually I had to leave that to the regiments, and contented myself with the washing and issuing of clean kits. For this I got one of the school houses. Then I saw the Maire, and arranged for a gendarme to go round and beat up all the women who would wash. When eleven turned up at the Mairie, we discussed prices, and arrived at a flat rate of ten centimes (one

penny) per garment, I to supply soap, soda, and undertake drying the clothes. I made one room of the school house my storeroom, the other was hung with ropes, and used as a drying-room, heated by coke braziers. The method of procedure is as follows—Regimental carts come up daily, and I give out clean sets—shirt, vest, drawers and socks—and they return later with dirty ones in exchange. These are put in the sterilizer, and steam heated, and so rendered less lively. My natives then make them up into sets. The washerwomen take away as many as they like, and return them the next day. They are then hung up to dry in this room, outside if fine, and above the boilers in an oil-cake factory near by. To-day was fine, and outside the school-house every tree and fence and clothes line was adorned. Then they are bundled up ready for issue. All this sounds easy, but in practice is a great worry. First of all I had to wait a long time for my supplies of soap, soda, and coal. Regiments "groused" to the General that I was not giving them enough, but he knew my difficulties, and took my part. But I have also two other side shows to keep me out of mischief. Our ambulance has been divided temporarily into two sections, and the one remaining here made me Mess President. That means going out for provisions, etc. Then headquarters presented me yesterday with a new preparation—"Vermijelli"—and asked me to report on its value. It looks like axle grease, and is supposed to kill lice and fleas, and make you proof against them. I seized the nearest native, and found on him plenty of material for experiment.

Rubbing on the jelly certainly kills the lively lads. Then I tried a solution, and soaked shirts in it. The beggars were apparently dead, and I hung the shirts up to dry, when they promptly came to life again. Finally I made the native bathe, and then anointed him all over, giving him clean underclothing and his old tunic, which had been treated well. Now I am watching to see how long he will remain proof. Such is the way I fill in a day here. It is certainly doing something, and I get no rest the whole day long. I don't quite see where the medicine and surgery come in,, but it is my job. I needn't complain of monotony. The weather is showing a decided improvement. We get beautiful blue skies, and a strong drying wind. The nights are moonlight also at present. What a change to the last couple of months, but this water-logged region could do with a month of Queensland summer.

◆ ✚ ◆

9/3/15.

I AM still busy with the washing arrangements. Things went along quickly once we got into the swing of affairs. However, I have learned by this how long it takes to dry woollens. In fact, I am rapidly qualifying for an expert laundryman. To-day we received orders to close down, and to-morrow we move up closer again. There is a bustle in the air, and all day very heavy firing has been going on. I suspect a lot, and I think that before long the stagnation of the winter will have given way to fiercer slaughter than anything we have had so far. We all recognise that April and

May will be bad months. The weather has been extremely cold again, and snow has fallen, but on the whole it is drier and sunnier. Up to this I haven't given you a detailed account of how the R.A.M.C. works. The first link in the chain is the stretcher bearers. In peace time these are the bandsmen, who get special instructions. Each regiment has about 16 of these. They may stay up in the trenches with their companies, or else remain behind with the medical officer handling the wounded. When a casualty occurs they apply the first aid dressing, and also iodine to the wound. At first they did not carry iodine, but now they always do so. Then the wounded man is brought back by night (I am speaking of the conditions of trench warfare) to the regimental aid post. Here is the medical officer. The aid post is some building behind the trenches, at a varying distance of from 200 to 1,000 yards. While out of the rifle fire it is usually well within range of shells, as I found out some weeks ago. The medical officer may, or may not re-dress the wound—the less it is interfered with the better. He usually contents himself with giving the man a warm drink—tea is always on, and often some soup. In addition, the wounded get morphia. As far as operations go, practically none are done, because there are no facilities for them. Beyond setting fractures under anaesthetics, and controlling hemorrhage by tourniquet, nothing is attempted

The next link is the Field Ambulance. They are mobile units, and stay up in some village about four miles or

so behind the firing line. In the British Army the transport is motor, but we in the Indian have to rely on the old horse waggons. We hope soon to remedy this. At regular hours, day or night, the ambulance come up to evacuate the aid posts. A medical officer goes with them, and looks after the wounded. This part of the chain is often the most dangerous. We have to go down roads swept by bullets, and shells often quite accidentally I am sure, find us or go pretty near. Waggons come to some spot where they can shelter, and the stretchers are taken by a party down to the aid post. The ambulance is stationed usually in a school house or a large barn. Here for the first time can operations be performed under fairly aseptic or antiseptic conditions. The wounded are entered and classified, their wounds redressed, and then they get a warm drink, and get put to sleep. Any urgent operations are also performed. The next stage is to the casualty clearing station, this is always at rail-head in some town. Each station is the centre for several ambulances. Motor cars come out and evacuate the cases from the ambulances. In fact, these places are really glorified field ambulances, with bigger and better accommodation, and at a railway. This is the furthest up a nurse can go. The men are re-dressed here, if necessary; but more important, they get bathed and cleaned up. On account of this they are usually known as cleaning stations. If you could see the condition of the poor fellows you would understand how this term arose.

Then comes the Ambulance Train—a magnificent hospital—and a quick and gentle transit down to the base. That brings us to the general and stationary hospitals, with every convenience known to civilisation. From there they are sent by hospital ships home. That is a rough outline of the way we send back casualties. For the sick men it may be different. Each regimental doctor sees his sick, and determines who must go back. They then reach the Field Ambulance, where all those likely to get better in three days are kept. The others go to the clearing station, and are kept a fortnight. If not better they go to the base, and are then drafted in groups for home, or for the convalescent camp, from where they return to duty . The scheme works well, and there is no doubt that we have the best medical corps of any of the belligrents. This war has completely upset all the book instructions gathered from the South African war. (See page 116 for later information. Ed.)

◈ ✠ ◈

18/3/15.

REFERRING to previous remarks about the roads. The main ones are good—in the centre. The smaller roads are just tracks, and nothing more. In this black country they are the main arteries going between the towns, and there are also a maze of small roads. The traffic has been abnormal, and there is no room for big lorries to pass, and both keep on the paved section. Once a waggon gets off the road, down it goes up to the axles. However, the weather is rapidly im-



No. 7, BRITISH FIELD AMBULANCE – March, 1915.

proving, and the roads are drying up fast. I suppose in summer this region will be very hot and dusty.

Since last I wrote the great battle of Neuve Chapelle has occurred. You will have read about it, but perhaps I can give you some idea of it ,as this is where I have been all along, and being my first big fight I am naturally proud to have been in it. Ever since I came up from the base we have worked this sector of the line, and I especially have been all about it, and been well baptised with fire. The preparations for this thrust were very well laid. Everything was done in secrecy, and no one knew exactly where the push was to be made. By night regiment after regiment went up until the area behind Neuve Chapelle was packed with troops. For several months we had been getting an ascendency over them as regards artillery, especially of the heavy variety. All round here big guns bristle almost in every hedge. As for aeroplanes we simply disregard them, for only one ever came up, and it always ran away. Then came "Der Tag." The artillery blazed away for about 40 minutes. The noise was awful, and nobody had heard anything like it before. There were more than 200 guns at work at once. The air simply pulsated and whirred. One can only imagine what the inferno was like in the German ternches. Most of the men were dead, and the rest surrendered as our men charged. Though the effect was terrible on the Germans, our men say that they could not have stood it much longer. This artillery fire was the most concentrated that has yet been used in the

war. The Germans were surprised, but, as usual, fought well, and with reserves pouring up a great battle ensued, but our men were not to be denied, and we have made an appreciable straightening of the line.

Now for the medical aspect: The work was terrific, for such an attack means a heavy casualty list. Though it is not as bad as being in the trenches, still we had a very strenuous time. Day work was not very safe, and most of our trips were done in pitch darkness. We had to go down roads swept by shrapnel and machine guns. Every few yards we had to rush to the ditch and lie down as a shell came over. The sights we saw were awful. A battlefield is not a pretty sight. Down this road, absolutely cut to pieces by the traffic and shells, and covered with dead and wounded, were men groaning and crying for help mid the screaming of shells. At one spot shrapnel had blown a lot of men into the ditch, where they drowned—dead men sitting up in the water—Germans and British mixed. It was absolute hell. Our aid post was hit several times, and one man killed when upstairs. Up there one has not the slightest idea of how the fight is going. The wildest rumours go round, but whether we are advancing or retreating nobody knows. We have just to go on night and day, and get evacuated as soon as possible. Our native bearers were wonderful. They are from the Bazaars, and have no military training, but they carried men for two miles, and had to sleep what little time they had in the open. We were very proud of them. Several

were killed by bullets. Two things stand out—the brilliant way in which the Indian troops fought, and also how the Territorials played the game. The Indian knows what to do in the open, but trench work was new and strange to him. This time they fairly got their blood up, and the Germans suffered accordingly. One lot of Gurkhas got surrounded by three German regiments, and cut their way out. The Germans surrendered by the hundred. Some tried treachery after holding their hands up. The majority of these were shot after being captured. Others were decapitated at once by the Indians. after the battle the piles of dead were awful, and they are still there. Modern battle is pure carnage, and there are few redeeming features, except the bravery of the men. I made a point of questioning several German wounded about the condition of affairs in their lines. They were all well fed, and in very good condition. They did not have K. bread served out, and in fact did not have so bad a time at all. They were very respectful about our shrapnel, but one can only write home and try to impress people with the fact that the German Army is still very much alive. They are not on their last legs by a long way, and the task before us yet is stupendous, though we shall pull through in the long run. Nobody here takes them cheaply. They are a brave enemy, though very unscrupulous. We are now resting, and will be very soon up again to await any fresh developments.

AFTER THE BATTLE.

25/3/15.

THE heavy fighting is over for the present, and both sides are resting. We have had some ideal weather, with the roads dried up, and actually dusty. It was a very welcome change. But March won't let us rest long with any kind of weather, and we are again having rain, and the good old mud. However the days are really improving, and so are our spirits. The papers have expended a lot of adjectives over Neuve Chapelle. We have also, after reading them! They all give the whole credit to the British Divisions, whereas they were not there at all. The people who did the job were the Indians and the white regiments in the Indian Corps. We are rather fed up by the natives not getting their proper share of praise, but doubtless in the official despatch later that will be put right. After the main affair, the Germans continued to shell the church in the village behind. They used up over 200 shells before they got the spire. Naturally they wanted to get it, for we used it as an observation post. In addition they dropped shells regularly into all the surrounding villages—old haunts of mine, and in several cases caught our men. One medical officer had his arm blown off. When leave was last opened the Indian Army were rather badly treated, compared with our British colleagues. However, as a kind of reward after Neuve Chapelle, leave has again been opened for us. I have been hard at it since September 11, with never a day off, while practically every officer with as long service has at least had two short periods of leave. On previous occasions my leave

was blocked through my taking charge of the baths, and again I have been placed on this duty, but I hope to get away in another week. I will enjoy a change even for a couple of days from the mud and monotony of Flanders and also away from shells. A couple of nights ago we heard a Zeppelin passing over us, but luckily it did not worry us. Taubes have been busier lately, but they have done little damage.

◈ ⊞ ◈

11/4/15.

(After a week of leave spent in Great Britain.)

MY holiday was a very welcome break. It was good to get away from the farms and all that is comprised in that magic phrase, "The Front." One has few delusions now about war. I gloated over the peaceful downs of England, and life going on very much as ever. But I think that the folks at home are beginning to realise something at last. Our heavy losses at Neuve Chapelle have made them think a bit. I found all sorts of rumours re that battle—most of them half right, but I was astonished and very angry when I was cooly told that the British troops won the day. The village was taken by the Indian Corps—British and native. The price paid was heavy, but still worth it. There was some bungling, but those responsible for it were removed, and you may rest assured that if a man fails he promptly goes. There is no room for failures in this campaign. The return passage across the Channel was very rough. We apparently had no escort, and I was

wondering what would have happened if we had been caught. Before we left Folkestone all the boats were slung out in readiness.

The trip up country was made by supply train; it was slow, and not too comfortable. Then I came to my unit on a supply waggon. Two days later I was ordered to join the Highland Light Infantry, as Medical Officer, and I am with them at present resting; but this is not permanent, for when a man comes up from the base I shall return to the Field Ambulance. I am having a very busy time, as we are taking precautions to prevent the spread of disease during the warmer weather.

◈ ⊞ ◈

22/4/15.

I HAVE been extremely busy, and am very glad of it. With the approach of summer our sanitary precautions have to be greatly increased and it has been along those lines that we have been working at present Naturally all measures are carried out in the open air. The usual closet in this country is an old friend—the deep hole with superstructure. We dig short shallow trenches three feet by two by one. One trench is allowed to every twenty men in the billet, and they are filled in daily, and fresh ones dug. This is better than leaving them open for a longer period. The earth is piled up along side, and kicked in after use. Chloride of lime is also plentifully sprinkled about. Small holes with a layer of stones at the bottom are used as urine pits. All grease and fluids are poured over straw and

branches, which catch the solid particles, and allow the fluid to drain into a deeper pit, thence soak away. Every day these branches and their catch are burnt, and fresh ones put down. All tins and solid refuse are placed in incinerators, which are hollow mounds of bricks or earth with holes below, and open top. These smoulder away all day, and completely burn anything placed in them. What is left, chiefly tins, is placed in a pit, and eventually filled over with earth. Horse litter and manure are either taken to fields some distance off or burnt in large incinerators. In addition, there are several features peculiar to and typical of this flat country. All the farm houses here are low, square buildings, built round a central "midden." This is usually liquid below, and covered with straw and manure, though in many cases it is just simply a liquid cesspool. The prospect of these in summer is truly awful. How the people live here beats one. They get epidemics among the children of what is termed scarletina, but what I believe is a mild form of enteric. One could hardly wonder at it. So we are now turning our attention to such conditions. There are two ways of dealing with them—clean them out entirely, or cover them with chloride of lime and earth. The former has not been possible, so they have been all covered over. However, this does not prevent the people from putting more on top. Eventually I expect men will be appointed in sanitary squads, permanent in areas, to deal with them. The other trouble is the stagnant water in ditches along the roads. This is absolutely stationary, as there is no fall considerable enough to allow

drainage. Before long these will all have to be cleared out, probably by refugee labour. We have got also water testing outfits, and in any case all drinking water is tested before use, but in the advance we shall have a lot to do in this line, especially as our foes will probably destroy all the pumps, and also poison the water. This duty is another change, and I like it. All week my work has been duplicated, as I was in charge of a Gurkha battalion—their man was away on leave. The natives are very much cleaner than white men, and their billets are kept very clean. The O.C. has asked me to lecture the senior N.C.O.'s and the junior officers on sanitation in the billets and the trenches. I begin to-morrow. I do not know yet whether I am permanent with the regiment. I have seen the A.D.M.S., and asked him to allow me to remain—he is rather averse to breaking up a field ambulance. The O.C. is very keen for me to remain with them. This week we were inspected by the Commander-in-Chief.

◈ ⊞ ◈

23/4/15.

WE have just had a long march up to the reserve billets in a blinding dust storm. That is going to be a problem this summer—mud in winter, and now dust. We are back again to the old sound of big guns, and within range of "Jack Johnsons" also. Instead of getting a night's rest, we have just got orders to stand fast for a very interesting move, about which I cannot say more just now—but if it comes off we shall be in for

a very warm time. It means sleeping to-night in one's clothes.

(This extract was written on a scrap of paper, as the writer explains—"All my kit is packed, and I am only carrying necessities.")

◈ ⊞ ◈

29/4/15

SINCE last writing I have been, and still am, going through a very inferno. We have been brought up to Belgium to the great battle now on. The artillery fire is something awful. To-day it culminated in "Jack Johnsons," four at a time, all round my aid post. The church of the village and several farms are blazing. Most of the houses are blown down, and our turn may come at any time. Neuve Chapelle was a flea bite to this. But if I get out alive I shall have a lot to write to you about. I am with the Highland Light Infantry.

◈ ⊞ ◈

3/5/15.

I WANT just to send word that I have come safely through. We are on our way back for a well deserved rest. The week has been a nightmare, and we are lucky to be alive. Those who know what they are talking about say that it was worse than Mons, and certainly Neuve Chapelle. The last forty-eight hours were one constant bombardment.

A FORCED MARCH.

6/5/15.

THE past fortnight has been a very strenuous one, and it was impossible for me to write fully to you during that time. Even now we are under orders to move up after one day's rest, and it is very hard on the men. It would probably be better if I gave you my experience straight from my diary, first of all telling you why we were suddenly moved up into Belgium. As you will have read, the Germans used gas on the French, and forced them to retire, leaving our left flank unprotected. This was composed of Canadians, and they fought magnificently, but had to retire to keep in line with the others. At any time the salient at Ypres was pretty acute, and by this considerable success the Germans gave us an extra bulge. To hold them up and try to force them back large reinforcements were sent up. So we who had just come up to the reserve billets in our own area suddenly got orders to do a forced march. The whole Division, roughly 16,000 men, began the long trek at mid-day on the 24th. We marched on and on through new country, and eventually at 1 a.m., reached our billets, dead beat and foot sore, and rain falling.

We were off again at 7 a.m., and it was hard work. By this time we had left the flat country which had been our lot for so many months, and we were in quite hilly parts on the Belgian frontier. But we were not in the mood for going into raptures over scenery. However, one could not help noticing that the farms were more substantial and cleaner, and that there was an air of

prosperity quite foreign to our own part of the line. At mid-day we reached a lot of huts in a field, and here we stopped until the following day. The men were dead beat, and needed a rest. I got little chance of repose, as I had a foot parade, and was busy getting the men patched up, as we were going into action the following day. That evening we had an open-air service, and it was good to hear the Old Hundredth sung in the familiar Scotch accents. The guns were making a great noise all night.

26th April—

At 6 a.m., after getting loaded up with extra ammunition, and discarding all transport, we pushed off—still not knowing what lay in front of us. After passing through a small town we got to the outskirts of Ypres That old town is a terrible example of what artillery fire can do. Everything in ruins, and still they are bombarding it. But we hadn't much time to worry about it. Just before we reached it we were told of casualties in the battalions ahead of us. Each battalion spread out as much as posible, and hugged the hedges all the time. Later on we learnt that this was the only road out of the town, and that the Germans had its range to an inch, especially the pontoon bridge over the canal. On we went blissfully ignorant of all this until with a roar, a "Jack Johnson," landed about fifty yards to one side. We passed many dead horses, and several poor men. We got out of Ypres as fast as posible, and had several more shells near us. Our objective was a small village

on a hill, about one and a-half miles out, and near it we ran into a lot of shrapnel. I got one bit on the head, but it did no damage. But I did sprint near the end, and dive into a ditch. It fairly winded me. The battalion now lay down in a field in the open. Behind and in front of us were batteries. The Germans opened fire, and soon shrapnel and "coal boxes" were sailing over us, but luckily doing no damage. Coming up that road from Ypres every battalion lost men—ours were slight, only two. We lay in this field from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Meanwhile the officers gathered in a "Jack Johnson's" hole, and we had the orders read out, and I arranged about an aid post. At 2 p.m. our guns had half an hour's bombardment, followed by five minutes' rapid fire. As you can imagine the noise was pretty bad. Then our men advanced in open formation. The German shrapnel came over in dozens, and the fields were hidden often in clouds of smoke. Big shells fell too among the men, and big and little ones came over behind to where the batteries were. Meanwhile I had gone down into a valley and chosen a post. Thank goodness I did not stay there long, but advanced up to the village to be nearer my men, for later on, that spot was an inferno. Just prior to the attack I had given out baking soda to each man to use on his wet handkerchief against the gases which are used in this sector. While all the fire was being directed on the advancing troops I managed to fix up my aid post. We got the end house, an estaminet, or inn. It had previously been used by the Canadians. A big new house on the opposite side par-

tially sheltered us from the trenches. The first thing was to look for a dug out. We used a cellar which was only partially underground, and that had to do, though I knew full well that one good hit, and the house would have fallen in on us all. As there was nothing more to do until the cases were brought in, we just cleaned up the place and got ready. There were two rooms in front which we used for cases. I slept in the cellar, and behind we had a kitchen and some outhouses. The inn had a loft above these rooms, and then a tile roof—not much protection if a shell burst through. At the other end of the village, about one hundred and fifty yards off, was a cross road, and a church. The Germans landed shells on this spot with absolute precision. Between that corner and my place were houses, and two field ambulances had dressing stations in them. We were on undulating land, between two ridges, about four miles or so apart. From the end of the house you could see where the Germans were, and also watch our men advancing in the open. So much for the general lie of the land. I had proposed going on past this village—and the chance of being blown up—to a farm a little further on, but three other men were there. Later events proved the wisdom of this. It was impossible to receive wounded during the day, and the rush did not come until night. I got men of every regiment—just anybody who wandered along the roads. I was up all night, and what a row was on. Shells came across every minute, and one heard rifle fire and maxims all the time. At 5 a.m. it was dead quiet, and what a relief, though it did not last long.

27th April—

At 7 a.m. I managed to lie down on a heap of potatoes, and soon was sound asleep, being dead beat after the marches and my night's work. Even the heavy bombardment did not disturb me. The H.L.I. began to advance, and I went upstairs for a time to watch them with my glasses. This is the time when one feels an awful rotter, sitting in comparative safety, while others are advancing over open ground, with shrapnel and big shells simply pouring over them. It was a fine sight to see the "Jocks" advance, though now and then a figure would be bowled over. Meanwhile we got our share—the house opposite was hit fair and square, and a big hole made, and my outhouses were damaged. I got all my cases down into the cellar. I now saw the advantage of being at the far end of the village, for the Germans systematically shelled the cross roads and the church and surrounding houses. They were not far from me, but apparently the range was not altered. These cross roads had some trophies—dead horses, two motor cars, and to-day a Brigadier-General. It was absolutely unsafe to pass by, except at a gallop.

28th April—

The bombardment continued, especially of the cross roads and houses. One field ambulance cleared out, and the other had to take to its cellars, with the house in ruins over it. And I have to look on and wonder when my turn is coming, for the interval between us is only fifty yards. The French made an attack on our left, but

it came to nothing, owing to gas being used again. It was a light day for me, as our men were not attacking. During the day one sees no traffic on the roads, simply a few motor cycle riders tearing along at full speed, and also ammunition limbers coming up with fresh supplies. At night up come the ration parties, and they all stop in front of my place. The wounded are evacuated day and night, though if the shelling is bad, only at night. It is wonderful how these Red Cross cars dash along the roads, and come so far up in broad daylight. They are a brave lot.

29th April—

There was the usual high explosive demonstration against the batteries in the early morning, with little appreciable result. So far I have not told you about those batteries. After the Canadians retreated, this battery took up its present position. It is composed of 18-pounders (3.3-inch)—a good field gun, but not of the weight required to put out of action the heavy metal the Germans have brought up. They lie about one hundred yards behind me, and also in neighbouring fields. When we arrived they had fired about eleven thousand rounds, and since then they have been hard at it day and night. One gets used to the bark of an 18-pounder, though it is not pleasant. But I take off my hat to No. 10 Canadian Battery. They are our only support, and the Germans have got their range, and send over all sorts of big stuff. German gunnery is good, but they have been aided by spies—several of whom were caught to-day.

SOME QUESTIONS.

With all this continued bombardment one is getting a bit pessimistic. Where are our heavy guns? Where are our reserves? And where are our aeroplanes? To-day we had no less than four Taubes over us, dropping smoke bombs, and, of course, followed by a heavy bombardment. We got our revenge on one. He came low down, and the whole line of our men opened with rifle fire and brought him down. But the Germans did not let us keep the plane, for by shell fire they wrecked it. In the afternoon the village was very heavily shelled, and towards evening the church and one of the houses caught fire, and we had a big blaze. The Germans used this as a target, and plugged more shells over. The hospitals were heavily shelled also, and they were abandoned later that evening. Now I am the sole occupant of the village, and a poor honour it is to be sure. Some of my men went up to the abandoned hospitals and brought down stores for us. We found two dead men, and gave them a decent burial. In the fields near by are some cows. We have collared one, and so have fresh milk. Two pigs wander about, and really they lead a charmed life, for nothing ever hits them. I hope to continue this when we reach our next billet. They gave us one day's rest, and now we are moving up in support of our own sector. Truly life is anything but a bed of roses just now.

A HEAVY BOMBARDMENT.

30th April— 9/5/15.

ANOTHER heavy bombardment of the fields behind us, though the village was left alone. Some of the hits were very close to us. All through my letter I have mentioned a heavy bombardment, but you can have little idea what it exactly means. All this week we have been overwhelmed by the German artillery. They have turned the tables on us in revenge for Neuve Chapelle. What a variety of shots came over from three different directions. First of all we had the "Ypres Express"—the big 17-inch shells going straight on to that town. They made a big noise, but that was nothing. Next in size were the "Jack Johnsons" or "coal boxes." These whirred over us all day long, and when they burst sent up an enormous cloud of dense black smoke. In addition they left some holes in the ground. Ordinary shrapnel with its fleecy clouds was very common. Then there was the whizz bang, or pip squeak. This shell, unlike others, gave you no notice of its approach. All you heard was a sudden phew-bang. It was very local in its action. The most terrifying though was rather a mysterious shell. It sounded like one, but gave three explosions, and I could never be sure whether it was one shell, or a series of three. But the explosion fairly sounded—it was like "prump—prump—prump," and usually immediately after it came some shrapnel. In addition we had plenty of ordinary lyddite. During the whole week we never had more than one hour without shells coming over. At one period we had forty-eight hours' continuous fire. My house

simply shook like a leaf at times from the explosions, and once I was knocked down by the air from a shell. It felt just like an iron hand pushing me over. As you can well imagine, one did not feel exactly happy with all this fire. The batteries were only just behind me, and one never knew when a shot just a bit short might get us. However, I had to stay on and risk it. During the evening the artillery fire was worse than on any previous night, and three farms and some houses near by were burning.

1st May—

At 9 a.m. I got a message to come and see the O.C. in the trenches. Off I went across country right up to our second line. I did not feel too brave going over those fields in broad daylight in full view of the Germans, but beyond getting some shrapnel over me nothing happened. The fields were simply riddled with holes, big and little. Many of them had a curious little trough at one side where apparently the shell had entered before exploding. The appearance of the hole may be described as an oval with a small projecting lip at one end where the shell entered. The men were all dug in, and I saw the O.C. in his dug out. However, I am not very keen on wandering over a battlefield, just between attacks in daylight. That afternoon our men attacked, and made a magnificent charge; but we had to stop short. But it was grand to watch our men going on. Of course the aftermath came when I got the wounded in. I shall always remember that night. I

was hard at it from 7 p.m. to 4.30 a.m., without stopping. Cases poured in, and soon I had every room full, and all the outhouses, and even outside. Outside it was fair hell. Shells were coming over in dozens; the houses near me were on fire; my own place was hit, and next morning I found that one shell had landed in the back yard. But I was too busy to notice any of this. By the dim light of two candles I was bending over stretcher cases and wading through field dressings. At the end I could hardly stand, I was so dead beat. I managed to get them all safely away at 5 a.m., and then we packed up, as the regiment had left some hours previously. With another medical man, equally tired, I walked down over part of the battlefield, and then through Ypres. It was dead calm, and we got away safely. But what a number of dead horses were lying about, and some poor fellows too. The stench was something awful. I should liken this road from the outskirts of Ypres, up to where I was, to the Valley of the Shadow of Death. The Germans had its range, and woe betide the wayfarer. One had to rush through it at any time, and the odds were against him. It consisted of ruined houses, and great holes in the road, and wrecked transport, and dead horses, and poor drivers too. And yet that Sunday morning, as we passed the worst spot (at the pontoon bridge over the canal) we heard music from one house. A few Tommies wandering back were going through the houses looking for anything and chancing on a piano, were strumming a comic song. Truly Thomas Atkins is a wonderful being. I was dead beat when I got back to the regiment,

but I had more work to do. However, I had done my best under conditions which, to say the least, were not very pleasant or healthy, and the reward I got was very heartening. The Colonel of the Field Ambulance, to whom my cases had gone, sent me a message saying that my cases were the best dressed he had ever seen, and he congratulated me on them. They were all sent on at once to the train. Our padre was also there, and he said that our men looked quite different from those of other regiments, and that they were all very grateful for what we had done. My own Colonel and the officers of the regiment were very pleased at this also. Don't think that I am boasting in mentioning all this. But I had a terrible week, such as you cannot imagine, and was lucky to come out safe, and the last night was no joke—but when I heard that praise I had a feeling that there are rewards not tangible, but just as precious which a doctor only can get. I did my best, and that was all about it, for I couldn't have done anything else.

◈ ⊡ ◈

10/5/15.

I did not meet with any gas cases, for we did not have much in front of us, though regiments near by suffered severely. One need hardly waste space complaining of such methods. We shall just have to lick them by similar means if ordered to do so, or by sternly fighting on. Apparently chlorine is the gas most in use, though other gases are emitted also. The great thing we have to do is to reassure the men. They don't mind ordinary warfare, but this is something unknown. The

gas can, of course, be seen by day, and at night a hissing sound betrays its issue from the pipes. Until the men get respirators, the only thing to do is to retire from the trenches, and then to charge back through it, when the fumes have dissipated a bit. Hand bombs will help to break up the fumes also. The chemical means of getting rid of it are solution of "hypo" (used in clearing and fixing photographic negatives) and washing soda. These are now supplied to the troops. The effects on the men are simply devilish, and it does make one's blood boil to have to stand by and be of such little use. We shall make them pay up for all this later. Another thought which strikes me is the comparative inefficiency of a large part of all artillery bombardments. We probably went through a week of more concentrated fire than any troops ever did. Yet ninety-nine per cent of the shots went into earth, and did no material damage. The fields certainly were simply pitted, but beyond that little damage was done. It made one rather feel that after all, if a shell was going to hit you it would, despite what precautions you took, and that in the meantime you could go on with your work and disregard them. I was very amused one afternoon watching a lot of our men chasing some cows over the fields with their canteens amid quite a respectable amount of shrapnel. Our journey back to the old spots was uneventful, though very fatiguing. All marches have to be done by night, and it is hard to keep going. I was getting quite an expert at walking along, practically asleep. We found that some mouth organs were a great help to make us forget the never ending kilometres.

SMITH DORRIEN'S THANKS.

After resting a day, we were warned for another great attack now on, and weary though we were, the men were keen to get a bit of their own back. That battle is now raging, and more I cannot say yet.

Yesterday the General came to us and read out Smith Dorrien's thanks to the Lahore Division. It confirmed what I had thought of the whole business. When the Germans broke through they seriously threatened Ypres, and if they had got over the canal banks would have cut off a large number of our men and compelled them to surrender. We were rushed up, and to quote the Second Army's Commander's words:—"Without adequate artillery preparation, and against an overwhelming artillery, maxim, and rifle fire, together with a glacis position and poisonous gases you stopped further progress. While only partially successful in attacking them you prevented any advance, and enabled the lines to be re-arranged, and thus in spite of heavy casualties saved your comrades"

This is something to be proud of, and I am glad I was in such an action. We had terrible losses, but we did what was wanted, and prevented any possible Sedan occurring. To-day I was ordered to return to my old field ambulance. I wanted to remain with the regiment, but ever since I left the Colonel has been trying to get me back. I should be pleased to be considered worth having. The ambulance has had to give up all its regular officers to other units lately, and there were a lot of new

chums who had never heard a gun fired. So naturally, as a veteran, I was wanted. The Colonel was good enough to say that he looked on me as his right hand man. I am acting second in command now, and specialist in advanced operative surgery, besides looking after the transport. All of which are honorary, but I feel that I have been of some use up at the front, and that means a lot. I am giving my best all the time.

15/5/15.

(Referring to letters received from Brisbane.)

THE nurses you refer to, and as many more Australian nurses as possible, will be very welcome here. I read lately that many of them had been rejected by the War Office regulation refusing to recognise them, unless from hospitals of over one hundred beds. But we need every nurse available, for already amateurs with only a few months training are being sent out. I need hardly say that I feel pleased that my letters are of such interest. One is often tired when writing, but it is cheering to know that they are appreciated. By this time you will be getting full details of the Dardanelles, and Australia has cause to be proud of the way her boys went ashore. It was different from our warfare, but the same old spirit shows forth.

(Referring to the destruction by gas of prickly-pear.)

It is a pity we could not have some of that arsenical preparation for prickly-pear to use on the Huns. Since last writing the measures we have taken against the

chlorine gas have been very successful. The men have waited while the fumes passed by, and then fired on the advancing Germans. The pads, or respirators, are soaked in a solution of theosulphate of soda ("hypo"). For the last week this ambulance has been doing nothing, and time has hung heavy on our hands. But the fight has been going on steadily, and the loss of life has been something appalling. For over a week now three fights have been going on. To our north, at Ypres, the struggle still continues. After we came back new troops came up, and the fight became even more desperate. The Germans have been pushing us back very slowly, and it would not surprise me if the town fell. But then we would have a straightened line, and a better position. Meanwhile, the French just below our line have made a very marked progress, and still are pushing on. Last week end we made an attack here, and I rather think it was meant to be an elaborate feint, to relieve the French and the British at Ypres. Of course, we would have gone on if successful. This part of the line is very strongly protected, and our attack did not succeed. The Germans retired during the preliminary bombardment to dug outs, or rather subterranean passages reinforced by concrete, and practically shell proof. When our men advanced they came back to the mined first line trenches. It was the same old tale of British doggedness against a withering fire, but we were held up. I wish the slackers at home could only see how our blood is being poured out here for them. If they could only see the barbed wire thick with corpses, or rows

of men mown down by maxim fire, perhaps then they would come out and help us. The plain truth of the fighting recently is, that instead of pushing the Germans, we are being put to our utmost to hold them in. Don't think I am despondent, but when one has been battered about as I was recently it certainly destroys any optimistic feelings. As I write the big guns are thundering out again, preparatory to another attack, and this one we hope will be successful. The country is looking very well just now. The trees have become covered with leaves, and the hawthorn blooms under a blue sky. Flanders looks pretty, and what a contrast to the winter. But within three miles of here thousands of corpses lie unburied, and more are added to them daily. The grim harvest is still being gathered in, and there are many more days still to go.

◈ ✠ ◈

20/5/15.

WE are still resting, and doing nothing,, though our men are not remaining so quiescent. At the beginning of the week the Indian troops kept the Huns busy opposite here, while the Seventh Division swooped in on them lower down, and made a great advance. But as usual our luck with the weather was dead out. The wind always blows towards us, or else fog and rain come on, and the latter occurred this time. The attack rather took the Germans by surpise. The artillery fire was very heavy, and from prisoners we heard that it was very successful. It was so intense that the ration waggons could not come up to the trenches, and for twenty-

four hours the Germans were without food. The men who surrendered were a very weedy lot, quite different from the usual. But all who desired to give themselves up did not manage to do so. One lot were spotted by their own side, who promptly began to fire on them. As we could not get them, we put our artillery on them also, and between the two fires not a man remained. The Guards also came to a lot who put up their hands, but to no avail. Our men simply wiped them out, and refused to be held back by their officers. One cannot blame them after what the Germans have done to our men, especially the wounded. A Prussian officer was being led back under escort near here, and made some offensive remark to his escort, who promptly bayoneted him on the spot. The last three weeks have been an orgy of slaughter, but one has got used to that now. We only think in thousands now as regards casualties. The methods of the Germans have so aroused our men that nothing will hold them in. They are exacting a tribute from the Huns for all their misdeeds. In the last advance the Germans had no gas cylinders though they used asphyxiating bombs. But probably after this enforced halt, they have brought up the gas. However, with our masks and helmets we are prepared for them. So far we have not used any gas ourselves, but it is not because we have any squeamish feelings. The losses we sustained were comparatively slight in the attack—much less than we expected, and the Germans are said to have lost ten thousand. For a fortnight now they have had reverses all along the western line, and their losses must have

been enormous. But we haven't taken the fight out of them yet by a long way. We know that their 1915 class has been called up, and is being used, and we hope that soon the terrible drain will tell on them. Meanwhile we are being faced like you with a serious shortage of water. There are so many men concentrated in a small area that most of the wells are running dry. Probably we shall have to drink canal water before long. As it is, water for animals and washing purposes is taken entirely from the ditches. As we advance the problem will increase, for we may be sure that all the wells will be poisoned. The old "Grandmothers" (the 15-inch howitzers) have been busy lately, with good results. One old lady was told off to obliterate a certain town. The first shot went 500 yards wide, much to the gunner's disgust. The next day the General congratulated them on their work, and said that this shot had absolutely wiped out a German battery. Round this same gun were three houses. When the first shot was fired one house collapsed, and the others were speedily evacuated. Since Ypres, one is inclined to forget that there are any dangers about here. But a couple of incidents have soon given us a reminder. A close friend of mine, and an old pupil at the Rotunda, has just died of his wounds. He was with his regiment near me at Ypres. The man who replaced me with the H.L.I. had a narrow escape on his first day. A piece of shrapnel went through his cap, and another gave him a nasty bruise on the side . His orderly was killed by his side. The H.L.I. are a very unlucky regiment for medical officers, and I got out well for the

period I was with them. My days up at the trenches are numbered at present. The Colonel is keeping me at headquarters to run the show, and the other fellows go out. It is a compliment, and one should be satisfied. But one is always hankering for the more exciting visits to the aid posts. However, any day may bring a surprise, and one really does not know what is in the future.

◈ ⊞ ◈

27/5/15.

THE Australian contingents have been doing great work, and their losses have been heavy. But my own Division alone, in these few days at Ypres lost more than the Australians up to date, and since then we have been bled very badly. The casualties this month reached a figure which would surprise you if I mentioned it. But the Germans have also suffered. We know they have drawn on their 1916 class, and also called out the oldest men from the Landstrum. With Italy in, and a new stretch of frontier to guard, even though passively, they will feel the drain. We have still to bring up K's millions, and the French have not used their 1915 class. Since I wrote last I am again up in the trenches with another regiment—the Fourth King's Liverpool (Territorial)—replacing their medico, who is on sick leave. Apparently I am being kept as a sort of general utility man, ready for any job when required. When I was appointed to the regiment they were in the trenches, where we lately broke through. It is in the area I did so thoroughly early in the year. Going up by motor ambulance we

just missed a high explosive at one cross road. We saw everybody running for shelter, and guessed the reason, and soon smelt it. I had not been here since the memorable Neuve Chapelle action, and how battered it now looked. I found the Brigadier in the old aid post to which I used to sprint so hard. It was badly damaged, and hardly recognisable. After finding out my regiment's whereabouts, I walked over to it. My aid post was about three hundred yards behind the firing line. As the regiment was coming out that evening I had little to do. It was interesting, however, to watch the shells coming over, especially the "coal boxes." The enemy spotted the reliefs taking over, and they shelled the trenches very vigorously with shrapnel and pip squeaks. The latter are three-inch high explosives fired with a very flat trajectory, and give no warning of their approach. Our billets were still within shell range, and one company was billeted alongside a good old "Grandmother"—the one about which I told you recently. The gun is carried in three sections, and requires five traction engines of one hundred and sixty horsepower each. The shell is a monster four and a half feet high, and weighing about one thousand four hundred and sixty pounds (13 cwt). It is naturally only used for a definite object, and always has an aeroplane up to observe the shot. Near by were two anti-aircraft guns. I have been talking to several airmen, and they all tell me that the Germans go very near them with their shrapnel. In the early days of the war it was easy work, as the Germans were very bad shots. However, they have improved

tremendously, and our men have a very warm time whenever they go up. One man put up a record last week—eighteen shots perforated his planes. I saw several thrilling sights in the last few days—our plucky fellows just going on with shrapnel bursting all round them. During two days' rest I was busy getting my department up to date. A Territorial regiment is different from a regular battalion. Then we came up again, and so far have had a quiet time—but one never knows when it may change. Yesterday I went through all the trenches right up to the advanced ones, to make a sanitary inspection. Coming back I was pestered by three snipers, and that part of the journey was not pleasant—bullets buzzed by me like flies, and I was not at all happy.

◈ ⊞ ◈

31/5/15.

READING your letters, with the note of drought and heat, sounds familiar. We are having very close, muggy weather now, with multitudes of flies, and the water question has become serious. The nights at present are very cold. Since I last wrote I have been up in the trenches once more, and am now back again resting. This latter term is rather a misnomer, as we have had two alarms already, and we never know when we may have to go up. The Lahore Division has had a very hard time lately. Since Ypres they have been on the go all the time; in the trenches, and then out for one or two days, then back again bearing the brunt of attack with heavy losses, sandwiched with

periods of trench work. The men are dead tired, and badly want a proper rest. This will soon come, and meanwhile we must just do our bit, while the new armies are concentrated elsewhere for another push. After we left our billets we soon got on the main La Bassee road. The most of it is in our hands, but part is German, and they have the range accurately of the rest. I found my aid post was the last house before the trenches. It was a very roomy place, and held three aid posts besides a regimental headquarters. The latter was a distinct injustice to the medicos. The Germans always search for headquarters, and shell them heavily. But worse was to come, for the Colonel cleaned up the place and then burnt the refuse. Imagine a fire within three hundred yards of the trenches. Luckily a heavy wind was blowing, and no smoke ascended, also no Taubes came over. But we expected to be "krumped" any time. I actually had my room decorated with flowers picked in the fields—hawthorn, poppies, and cornflowers. They reposed in empty shell cases. I slept on a little straw, with my Burberry as blanket, and my knapsack as a pillow. Of course I was fully dressed all the time. I fared very simply, though well, on rations. One day I had a regular treat with the regiment in the same building—this rose to curry and rice and pudding. There was an old dog which had not deserted the farm, and we were soon firm friends. She slept beside me every night, and was always about at meal times. A fair amount of shelling took place every day—big and little. But it always missed us, thank goodness. The

days were extremely hot at first, but then got very cold, especially at night. Apparently they get extremes in this part of the country. One had little to do all day. but just lolling about and reading. Often it was difficult to realise one was so near the firing line. The hot glaring road and dead silence, broken now and then by shells and rifle fire. At night the roads were thick with ration parties and reliefs. But the Germans never shelled them. There is a more or less tacit agreement to allow rations up unmolested. If they shelled us we would retaliate on them. However, snipers have a free hand, as I was soon to find out. I often went short walks up the road, and kept an ear open for any shells which seemed near. My companion was usually a very tough nut in the I.M.S.—an Irishman. He was arrested one evening as a spy, and had quite an exciting time. Near by was a big house known locally as the Doll's House. It had been hit twenty-six times by shells and we spent an interesting half hour inspecting it. Coming away we agreed that a cellar was more a death trap than anything else. If a big "krump" lands on one, it is all up. We have just got orders to move to a new area.

◈ ⊞ ◈

2/6/15.

THIS part of the line is very strong. Both sides have tried unsuccessfully to break through, and both have failed. So I suspect the Germans are not holding the line with more men than necessary, like ourselves. A few machine guns take the place of hundreds of men. Meanwhile concentrations are occurring elsewhere, and

I own we should be getting the benefit of them. The outstanding part of my last visit to the trenches was the tour I made of our section. Medical officers are forbidden to go into the trenches, unless under special orders from a superior officer. I, in conjunction with other medicos, was ordered one day to make a report on the sanitation of the trenches and surroundings. It will be no breach if I tell you now, that I was going to Neuve Chapelle. Previously everything had looked green and nice, though there were ruins everywhere. I had now come into an area of desolation, where everything was ruined, and upset, where even the trees were simply shattered stumps, and where the vegetation was not profuse. You will remember that at the battle in March, we subjected this area to a very intense bombardment, and I now saw the result. On both sides of the road were trenches—the old ones now disused. the ground was cut up by them in all directions, and what was not trench was a vast graveyard, for at least 15,000 dead have been buried here. I soon passed the corner where a road ran on to the main one, and down which our men came during the fight. When they reached the main road they were met by a terrific fire, and here most of the losses occurred. Now it looks innocent enough—just a narrow road, and a few ruins where houses had been. But in March it was named the Gate of Hell. I then left the main road, and walked up towards the remains of Neuve Chapelle. It was a fair sized village—now there are some pieces of the walls of the church standing—nothing more. It is an object

lesson of modern artillery fire. Up to this I had not seen a soul. The country seemed absolutely desolate, and most depressing—but near me were hundreds of men in their burrows. I soon came to the Colonel's dug out, and hastily got under cover, as a sniper near by was making things unpleasant. After a chat I set out with a guide for the front trenches. I may say that these trenches were originally ours last October, and then German, and once more our own. The Germans improved them immensely, and they were veritable palaces. Some day when I have the blues I shall tell you some of the things the Germans excel us at. The communication trench ran about half a mile up through the ruins of Neuve Chapelle. It was very sinuous, and the sides were not high—about four feet. So one did not feel very safe even when bending. It was quite dry, and the dug outs along it very cosy and strong. There were odd remnants of German equipment, and pumps all along it. And there was an awful stench. Outside was marshy land with a small stream, and here were lying hundreds of corpses. I saw one German who had been there for months, and he certainly was not a pleasant object, with his back above water. We are gradually at night getting these corpses buried. The main trenches rather surprised me. They are wide enough to let two past, and then there was a raised platform, and above this a high parapet of sandbags. The men on duty stood on the shelf. The trenches were broken up every few yards by traverses, to prevent any enfilade fire by machine

guns. I did not look over at the Germans, as I don't want specially to figure on the Roll of Honour. But I had to go out of them behind to reach the latrines—and this part of the journey was not pleasant, bullets were thudding against the sandbags all the time. After my inspection I sat in the Major's dug out, and had a yarn. Night came on, and the flares went up, and how bright they made everything. While I was there some shrapnel and pip squeaks were sent over us—but no damage was done. The return journey was much more lively. After leaving the trenches and getting on the main road by moonlight, snipers began to make things busy. One gentlemen had got well behind our lines, and on the opposite side of the road. He opened fire at me about one hundred yards away, and I could see the flash distinctly. Then from the far end of the road a maxim began to pot shots straight up. Between them I was having a pretty lively time, when two more began to shoot across the road. It was getting pretty warm by this, and the bullets fairly whizzed by me. However, I decided just to keep straight on, and not lie down. I breathed a sigh freely when I reached the barricade, but no sooner was I past when another blighter began—but he had no more luck than the others. Here snipers are a great pest. They crawl behind our lines, or in front of them, and lie in ruins. After they have used up their supplies they surrender. Later on, when we advance, we fully expect to have to deal with many more, and especially with maxims up trees. Here is an absolutely true story of a

sniper on this same road near where I was. Some Gurkhas were coming along, and one of them was sniped. The rest spread out, and caught the Hun, dressed in khaki. They made him dig his grave, and then standing him alongside threw bombs at him. Two did the trick. The sniper certainly deserves all he gets.

◈ ◈ ◈

6/6/15.

I CAME back to the ambulance a couple of days ago, and we are now in a big town, with the luxury of a bed and a bath. However, I haven't used any sheets yet—I am too attached to my old flea bag to want to change. Asquith was over this week, and reviewed the troops. To-night I saw the first of "K's" army passing down to a hot spot on the line. They looked a very fine lot, and it is pleasant to see new blood coming out to give us old stagers a hand—we need it.

◈ ◈ ◈

12/6/15.

WE have seen three of "K's" Divisions, and they look very fine. But so far they have not been put into the trenches. We are now in a big town, in a fine chateau, with a bath and a fountain in the garden. I am in charge of all the patients, surgical and medical, so am kept busy all day long. I sleep on the premises every second night, being on duty for emergency cases. The weather is very close and sultry. A few days ago we had heavy thunderstorms, and these cleared the air a bit. Still this is only a foretaste of what we shall get in July and August, and evidently we are in for a very torrid

time. As a result, the number of admissions for sickness is rather high. The warm weather is causing every man who has had malaria to have recurrences, and there is an epidemic very like dengue fever. But if our men get a decent rest I think a lot of this will disappear. The changes in the Indian Corps, which I mentioned in my last, have not taken place, and we are all relieved. But we have lost our Colonel, who has gone to an ambulance in "K's" army. He was a very fine type, and we were sorry to lose him. Leave has been opened again for those requiring a rest for their health. I am afraid I shall not be able to get away on that plea, for I certainly look fit enough. There are indications that soon we shall be using similar weapons to the Hun. I cannot tell you yet what gas we shall use—but I rather imagine it will not be as brutal as chlorine (more's the pity). We have also petrol bombs. To show you what we are expecting, we have now testing cases for poisons in water. We know quite well what they will do, and it is good to know we shall fight them on equal terms. It is no use talking about fighting with clean hands—that won't defeat gas fumes. I think the worst blot on the Germans is the way they fire on the wounded, and prevent them being removed. Why we rescue them beats one, and it would be better to leave them to die. This war is not making us any better, and soon we shall begin to think of letting all their wounded die. They don't deserve much better treatment.

A SIMPLE TREATMENT.

22/6/15.

AT present my job is to look after all the sick and wounded. This keeps me about the place most of the day. A ride on my horse in the afternoon is about the extent of my recreation. On several days I have gone grave hunting with the Padre. He is registering all graves. We have frequented spots which are usually pretty warm, but so far no shell has burst too near us. Our troops made an attack down at Festubert early in the week. It was partially successful. On our front we made a feint, just to keep the Huns busy. They got busy on us also, and sent plenty of bombs over. However, our casualties were light. Lately I have seen a good number of cases of shock, caused by shells bursting near men. The poor fellows are in a bad way shortly afterwards. Most of them are deaf, and often partially blinded by the flash and the explosion. They are quite dazed, and pitiable objects. One poor boy had only been up for a week, and he was a complete nervous wreck. It is a wonder how they stand the sights so well. One of the surgical consultants visited us during the week—a leading Aberdeen surgeon. It was a treat to speak to him, and to learn of the latest methods at the base. One knows so little here of what the men at the base do. Up to this iodine has been used practically for all wounds. We had been experimenting with formalin, two per cent in spirit, but from exhaustive experiments in Boulogne by leading bacteriologists a much simpler treatment has been evolved, and it is giving much better results also. A five per cent solution of salt with citrate of soda is the

dressing for all wounds. Tabloids of this are put in any holes in addition. The principle roughly is, that all the usual chemical disinfectants kill the tissues as well as the organisms, and so locally lower the power of the tissues to kill off germs still alive, but by using a saline solution, it tends to make more lymph flow into the wound, and with it the white corpuscles, or phagocytes, which eat up the germs. The tissue is not killed, and so one endeavours to combat infection by stimulating the natural resources of the body, and not by partially or wholly killing the tissues immediately round the injury. While other methods may prove more successful in wounds in civil life, I believe this simple method will turn out to be a great discovery for war wounds. Lately we have had a series of cases of kidney trouble of a very obscure origin. Nearly every one has occurred with artillery men, and we cannot find out the reason. As I have had all the cases in this Division I have been asked to investigate. Just at present I cannot go to the batteries specially affected, as the Huns have been shelling them vigorously, but soon I hope to try and find out the cause.

We have had great fun recently with our Indians—watching them wrestling in the Indian style. We challenged another ambulance, and put up a franc prize to the winners of each round. The natives got to with a will, and we spectators enjoyed the fun. They stripped all except a loin cloth, and the wrestling seems to be a mixture of jiu jitsu and English methods.

28/6/15.

(Referring to the landing of the Australians at Gallipoli.)

WELL may you be proud of the way the Australians landed. It seemed an impossible thing to do, and how they did it, makes one wonder. That feat will rank high after this war. Things are quiet on our front. The Hun is holding his line with many machine guns and few men. An awful carnage is going on with the French at Souchez. They have got a move on, and probably this will be where the line will be ultimately broken. The Indian Corps has taken over a bigger piece of the line. This is welcome news, because it means that we shall not be pushing! We want a rest badly. The chief interest for me since I last wrote has been my investigations into the outbreak of nephritis among the gunners. I went to all the batteries implicated, but as I expected, I did not find any obvious cause for the trouble. The men were all healthy—the cooking pots did not promise to provide any clues, and while water was drunk without being boiled, still very little was used. However, I took samples of both beer and water. These I took to St. Omer, to the analyst. It was a fine joy ride over undulating country, and quite a treat to get to a town with shops, and life more like what it is in normal times. You have to get a pass to get in or out of the town. It is built on very hilly country, and has several big churches. One was being used

as a garage, and on the top of another was an anti-aircraft gun, and yet we curse the Hun for destroying churches. The laboratory was quite interesting, for they were testing fragments of German shells, and doing experiments re a gas for us. I believe our variety is to be pretty good. I saw the apparatus each German soldier wears, against the use of gas by us. It consists of a piece of cotton waste, and a bottle of acetic acid. All our men are armed with respirators, and smoke helmets with a talc window, both soaked in a solution of soda and hypo. For the last few weeks I have been on constant duty in the hospital, and have been working very hard. I hope to get away on leave soon.

◈ ✠ ◈

3/7/15.

AT last we are having Australian weather conditions. It has been an extremely hot day, and I expect we shall end up with a thunderstorm. Meanwhile, we are tormented by smells—though not to the same extent as the boys in the trenches. Fancy rooting with your stick among a heap and dislodging old Huns dead for months. But the mosquitoes and midges are the limit. They give a most venomous bite. In the old days I did not react to bites, but here I raise fine lumps, and had to forment my elbow for three days to reduce the swelling. The hot weather has caused all the men with malaria to have relapses. Unfortunately the malaria carrying mosquito exists here, and we may yet leave a legacy behind us, which will be difficult to eradicate. We have had a fairly busy month,

putting through our hands over 1,000 cases (mostly sick). I had to do with them all, classifying and treating them. It was good to hear, as we did lately that the clearing station stated that our transfer certificates were the ones they valued most as they were always accurate in every detail, and gave the fullest information. That praise goes to my assistants mainly, for they are willing helpers. I had a very interesting talk with a Durham miner the other day. His accent was rather hard to follow, but he gave me an account of how a sap was made. They dug down 30 feet, and then out towards the enemy trenches for 300 feet. The sap was about 4½ feet by 3 feet, when timbered. The air was circulated by a pump. They heard the Germans above them busy making a counter sap, and managed to blow theirs up first. He concluded, "You should have heard them squeal like pigs." Aeroplanes have been very active on both sides lately, and as a result shelling has been vigorous. We fully expect that when the Russians are pushed back sufficiently we shall get the benefit of the big guns in earnest. Kind and pessimistic friends inform us of the existence of 12-inch guns at Lille, with a 20-mile radius, which are going to reduce our present billets. They advise us to clear out soon. I rather suspect they want the billets! But there is no reason why this town should not have been damaged long ago. There is an old French vet. living in my billet. The other day he got hold of a copy of the "Australasian," and saw some advertisement for veterinary instruments. These so interested him that I

was instructed to write and ask for a catalogue. Refering to certain reports, the writer says:—"The Hun only appreciates what he does to others—and a repetition of that medicine usually quiets him. I believe the French are fighting with a terrible ferocity. They all carry long knives, and in close combat such as this trench warfare is, the knife, and not the bayonet is the weapon. Extermination is the best way to beat the Hun, and not making him a prisoner and pampering him.

◈ ⊞ ◈

15/7/15.

(The writer had been spending part of his leave in Dublin.)

WE travelled via Boulogne. There was a special boat for us (about 1,000 all told), and we did the channel trip in quick time. So far no submarine has caught a mail boat. The passage is practically walled off on each side by torpedo nets. I believe this is the chief way we have of catching the submarine. We got to London at 5 a.m. I went to an hotel, and soaked in a hot bath for an hour, and then caught the early train for here. There is little change in Dublin. One is struck by the apparent indifference of the people here to the war. The mean little intrigues and squabbles are going on as of yore. The streets are full of young men in mufti. One feels like praying for "Gott to strafe" them. I only wish the Hun could come over here and waken them up. The Germans dread another winter worse than us, and they are likely to make a supreme effort

very soon. This is just what we want, for it will be easier to slaughter them than to be slaughtered. At present all the Indian troops are out of the line, and are being rested until they are required, with all the new troops they can now be spared. Recruiting seems to be very brisk in Australia just now, and well might it be, to cheer the lads who have done so well.

◈ ⊞ ◈

25/7/15.

FOR the first week after leave one always feels liverish, and inclined to "grouse" at anything. It is hard to settle down again. Leave unsettles the men also, for they see their pals comfortable at home, and earning anything from £6 a week upwards. It seems hard that they are out here risking everything. So far every three months has some new surprise or job for me. In the first it was baths, during the second the memorable march to Ypres, and I was wondering what this one would produce. I hadn't long to wait, for I soon got my orders to join a brigade of artillery, vice a man who went down sick. The job is only temporary, for my ambulance won't part with me. It is meant as a compliment, but I often wish I could be left at a new job for some time. My duties are not heavy. I live at headquarters, and have three batteries to look after, plus the waggon lines, and ammunition column behind us. Being an Indian command, I have assistant surgeons under me, and not R.A.M.C. orderlies, as in the British regiments. These assistant surgeons are Eurasians, and have passed a full medical course, so they can be trusted to work

absolutely alone. There is one to each battery, and I only call round every other day or so, and see any special cases. Two of the three batteries are quiet enough. The Hun leaves them alone, but the one nearest us gets more than its proper share of hate. Just behind these are batteries of 4.7 and 60 pounder guns, and these annoy the Bosche very much. My battery lies between them, and, acting as referee, gets all the hard knocks. The German shooting is very accurate, and they have made the main road past here pretty dangerous, 8in. and 5.9 and 4.2 came over at odd times all day long. They landed about 200 yards from here. Still we go out and watch the results, and never mind, though we are still within the range. I have to go across fields to reach the battery, and only use the road at odd times. To-day I got a reminder when I saw a big splash of blood and a cap on it. It is interesting to see the gunners working, and from reports they fairly make the Hun sit up. The weather has been unsettled lately, and for several days the roads resembled those of last winter, and next too, I suppose. Every night we watch the aeroplanes, and the shells bursting round them. The shells are pretty active at present. We see at least six aviatiks every day, and there are always fixed balloons up. They won't be caught napping again, as at Neuve Chapelle. Meanwhile the summer glides by and we remain stationary. It is very galling, but the Hun has us securely, and we cannot break through on our front. However, there are signs that something is in the wind in a new quarter altogether. Opposite our

house is a small graveyard, which makes one reflect. It consists of six graves—three British and three German —men who had fallen last October.

(The writer here indicates that this silent plot had previously been in German possession, and that they had put up better crosses over their own dead.)

These Germans were Uhlans, and one has an inscription, apparently copied from the original, that he had died a hero's death, from an aeroplane bomb. The graves are beautifully kept, and the men here have put stone crosses over each, and a big

R. I. P.

1914.

That sentiment represented our feelings towards the enemy until the end of the winter—now it is all changed. The total disregard of all rules, and the use of gas has altered us. They may sing their Hymn of Hate, but the ordinary Tommy has a Hate too. No German gets any consideration now. He is going to be killed, and not taken prisoner, and they have only themselves to blame. We played fair, and they did not respond. One knows what happens to men between the trenches—the slightest movement means a shower of rifle and machine-gun bullets. Not content with that, they spray the wounded, and then set fire to them, and incendiary bullets are used on those out of reach of the spray. I have spoken to officers who have seen all this and the

charred remains. Yet they have the affrontery to fly a red cross flag over a building in La Bassee. You may be sure no medical work is going on there, but we have respected it so far. Such conduct recoils on them, for we can also kill, and do so. A wounded Hun does not get much consideration now, and the unwounded variety just gets "his puddens stirred up," as a "Jock" told me.

Here are some spy incidents: When this brigade went up to Ypres one battery went to a farm where the people cleared out that night. The next day they were heavily shelled, and had to retire. When going they found that a large white door had been placed in a field as a guide to the aeroplanes. In the farm where the headquarters were was a nice green patch, and the farmer had dug a curious L shaped drain across it. Our fellows promptly dug up the whole place. Recently we have seen carrier pigeons fly from near here, and possibly that is why our battery is being so heavily shelled, but we cannot expect much else until we clear the civil population much further back. The flies are an awful pest at present, and much worse than in Australia. At night the mosquitoes fairly make one think of "Home, Sweet Home."

◈ ✠ ◈

3/8/15.

I AM now back again in the Field Ambulance. As leave was open, and we were understaffed, I was recalled. It was a nice week's rest, but too slow to last me for ever. Still, I had a very near call this week, and was taught a lesson, I hardly need, about the uncertainties of life up here. Near where we were billeted were

a lot of heavy guns, and the Hun gets very annoyed when they fire. It always makes him retaliate, and with heavy stuff too. One part of the road is absolutely unsafe, when the Bosche is at work. Nearly every shell hits it. I have to go past here, but usually make a detour through the fields. One day I was out when a shot reached one of the batteries and laid out eight men. Three days ago I went to one of our batteries to see some model dugouts, and was returning by the fields when the evening Hate began. An 8-inch "Jack Johnson" landed about 200 yards away, and I stood watching it, when I heard a very loud hum approaching me. I lay down quickly, and a huge fragment dropped less than ten yards away. The range of these big shells is pretty wide, and one is not safe from fragments for several minutes later. At this same battery a man was wounded by a machine-gun bullet, fired from the German trenches nearly two miles away. They had been firing up in the air at one of our aeroplanes. Yesterday we were shocked at a terrible accident on this same bit of road. I had been down at my batteries, which were sheltered out of range, but when returning as usual across the fields, I noticed something was wrong at the corner where all the shells land, and hurried up to be of any possible use. A staff officer had been passing along in his car, when one of the shells landed absolutely on it. The driver was blown headless 25 yards along the road, and the officer was in the ditch with half his face blown away and unrecognisable. The car was in pieces. It was a

sickening sight. Curiously both men left their feet in the car. The shock of the explosion must have been awful. One rather delights to see Huns hurtling through the air when a big shell bursts, but it is another thing to lose friends. The young officer was our chief postmaster, and if ever one had a safe billet one would have thought he had. I think this accident will make the corps close this section of the road when shelling is on. There is one patch about ten yards square, with five direct hits of eight-inch shell. The Hun has been helped to find the range by spies, and I was glad to see a few of them being marched in recently. They included a woman. We have a lot of refugees and Frenchmen working for us in a Labour Corps. They build trenches in the rear positions. One of them was killed recently, and they took the corpse in an open motor back to the town where his wife was. An unfortunate Belgian had to sit by the body and hold it up, and he naturally was the colour of the corpse itself. One is used to death in various forms by this—but still it was a gruesome ride, and what a homecoming.

◈ ⊡ ◈

9/8/15.

I HAVE been depressed this week over the latest casualty lists. My first regiment (at Aldershot) —9th King's Royal Rifle Corps—came out at the end of May. They went to Hooge, and it was their first time in the trenches. They got the liquid fire, and the list contains most of their officers. The Colonel was killed. He was a Sahib, as the Anglo-Indian phrase has

it. My best friends among the junior officers were also killed—all young fellows fresh from school or the 'Varsity. I had wished that my old regiment could have had a better start, but now the remains will have to go on. The week has been fairly uneventful, though a few bullets nearly found a billet in me. Being back in the ambulance I have gone on outside work with the bearer section. This was my original job, and I was always hankering after it, even though I don't relish bullets any more than anyone else. I have been acting this week as a kind of Cook's guide to men from ambulances just out with a new "K" division. They have been training for a long time at home, and were full of theory. They soon found out that the actual thing differed somewhat from what they had learned. I took out parties of three, and thoroughly enjoyed myself watching them duck to the bullets and lie flat when a flare went up. Do not imagine I am reckless, but after some experience one automatically knows when extra care is needed. But, of course, a stray bullet may come any time. In the last lot that were here were a couple of Australians who had come over with the hundred volunteers. They were both Sydney men, and I had the luxury of a good long yarn with them.

◈ ⊞ ◈

16/8/15.

THINGS remain in statu quo here, and are likely to do so. Frankly, I do not see how it could be otherwise. Both sides have tried unsuccessfully to get through. The French made a very big



LAHORE DIVISION—MESS SERVANTS.

push at Souchez. They reached the Labyrinth after awful slaughter, but they did not get through. Now we are held up by a large number of machine guns, and probably about 1,000,000 men along the whole western front. What good would it do to try and get through? Rather let them come on again if they want to, or else wait for developments elsewhere. Now that the enemy is threatening Serbia once more I fancy matters will take a sudden change down there, and that the Balkan jackalls will decide with which pack to hunt. We are now back in the country residence where we were, before Neuve Chapelle. After two and a-half months of luxurious existence in billets we are now under canvas, but the change is good, and we like it. The last few nights were, on the whole quiet when collecting cases, though on one occasion both sides were rather peevish, and bullets came pretty close. Good "old mother" (9.2 howitzer) chipped in, and it was grand to see the damage she could do—timber and sandbags and Huns hurtling through the air. Our new high explosive is also something, and bursts with a "krump" quite equal to its German confrere. A couple of days ago our Mohammedan natives had a great time at their festivities, the equivalent of our Lent. The last month has been Ramadan, during which they fasted, and did not drink until sunset each day. They also made the air noisy with their prayers and recitations from the Koran. When the last night came a message was sent from India, saying that the Chief Priest, or Muezzin, had seen the new moon, and that the fast was over. The Indians

dressed in white and careered round, embracing each other and making a great hullabuloo. Afterwards they had a feast of curried mutton and rice and spices. Sitting back here on a fine afternoon it is hard to realise a war is on. At present the tints of the trees and the fields are beautiful. Harvesting is in full swing—in the majority of cases old men and women and children are reaping. Occasionally a reaping machine can be seen. Nobody pays much, if any, attention to the aeroplanes overhead, and the anti-aircraft shells. Even big shells landing in the fields do not disturb the harvesters unless they come very close, and this condition of intense cultivation goes on right up to the front line, but then a change comes. The fields are still cultivated, but very ragged, because no sowing was done, naturally, last year. Grass grows luxuriantly all over the place; the change that is marked is in the condition of the trees and the houses. The woods here and on the La Bassee Road, especially about Neuve Chapelle, are the essence of desolation. The trees are all gaunt and absolutely devoid of foliage. Many are just stumps with jagged ends, like a human arm or leg after the rest has been blown off. Others still have the upper half lying on one side. The houses are mere shells, the roofs are skeletons of rafters, walls mostly non-existent, or simply a mass of holes. In many cases all that remains of the house is a heap of bricks. Trenches run in all directions, and sandbag barricades block the roads. Nothing is visible during the day save clouds of dust as shells burst. At night the roads are dotted with parties coming and going. Star shells light

everything up, and bullets whizz over, humming like bluebottles. Shell holes abound, and little graves and discarded provisions and kit. When the war is over it will take time to obliterate this awful zone which exists from the sea to Switzerland.

◈ ⊡ ◈

23/8/15.

OUR mails have been disorganised for a couple of days because a French mine got adrift off Boulogne, and stopped all traffic. We have had a peaceful week, just basking in what little sun there was, and going route marches, and doing physical exercises to keep fit. One afternoon when lying in my tent I was astonished to hear a couple of bullets whizz very close. A maxim was practising near by, and we had the benefit of a couple of shots. We soon warned them to get the gun turned elsewhere. We have also been honoured by a captive balloon which goes up near us. The honour is rather dubious, as the Hun naturally tries to shell it, and a village about a mile away got all his attempts the other day. The majority of the troops now fighting against Russia will probably be too tired to be used as first-class cannon fodder on this side. Their guns, too, will require re-boring, and so if we have a push before the winter we should be in a position to give them a hot time. Heavy guns continue to pour in to us, and the reserve of ammunition is now not contemptible. However, one does not know what will occur. We have just got a new order, to remove all cases from the aid post

by daylight instead of at night. We have been appealing for this for a long time, but the higher officers, never having been out at night, did not see the need of it. They always visited the line by day, and then there are practically no bullets, only an occasional shell. At night apart from the difficulty of finding one's way about in the dark, there are the ever present stray bullets, not to mention an odd sniper. One does not mind going through a curtain of bullets if there was anything to be gained, but the clearance of cases can be managed much better in the day, and it is certainly safer for us. At present we are preparing for next winter in the ambulance.

◈ ⊡ ◈

30/8/15.

SINCE I last wrote I have been up in the trenches again with the Connaught Rangers, replacing their medical officer on leave. These temporary jobs are a welcome change. I joined the regiment here about two hours before we marched up. We took about two and a half hours, and reached the front line at an advanced dressing station. From there we took to the fields for about a mile, and met a good many stray bullets. I found my aid post was in a farm, not too badly knocked about. The Brigade signallers had part of it, while my share was a fine cellar, with a dugout for myself. The cellar had a brick roof with iron girders, and above it was a loft full of dried beans,—quite a good buffer for any shell. It was a matter of detail that in winter this same cellar usually holds about three feet of water,—

let sleeping dogs lie, we are still in summer! My dug-out was very low, and too narrow—still I had a stretcher for a bed, and plenty of mice to keep me company. Later on I found that harvest bugs had also taken toll of me, and I am still suffering from their attentions—it might easily have been worse! I was lulled to sleep that night by the crackling of machine guns and rifles, and odd bombs, as trench mortars lobbed their shells over. The next day was taken up in going into sanitary matters. We now use empty tins for latrines, and clean them thrice daily. I was in the third line trenches with the reserve companies. Not far away was Neuve Chapelle. The whitened remains of its church strongly resemble the bleached bones of some dead animal, and stand out against the dark trees, most of which are branchless and leafless, stripped by the constant shrapnel fire. A good communication trench took one to the regimental headquarters, and support trenches, about 500 yards further on. These were situated in the remains of a little village on a road, now simply a collection of tileless rafters, and riddled walls. Naturally everybody was in dug-outs. The whizz of snipers' bullets was constant down here. Then one went on by Plum street to the orchard in the front line, about 300 yards. The trench here was much deeper and stronger, and soon one reached the limit. All the communication trenches have names. The ones in this part all led to an orchard, and are called Peach, Plum, Apple, Mole. Other parts of the line rejoice in old familiar names—Bond Street, Oxford Street, Leicester Lounge,

Piccadilly, etc. These names are official, and very confusing unless you know them. Naturally they do not figure on the ordinary map likely to fall into hostile hands. The particular front held by the Connaughts had very good fire trenches—high and solidly built. The Hun was only about 50 yards away at this place, so any movement soon brought over an enquiring bullet. I had a good look at the opposite side with a periscope. All one could see was a long white parapet. Between the two trenches was No Man's Land—composed of fields absolutely bare (all the grass had been cut down) and a few gaunt trees. Not a bit of life could be seen except occasional shovelfuls of earth thrown over the Hun parapet by a working party. But though nobody seemed to be watching, the thud of bullets on the parapet showed that the German was awake. Down there is the advanced trench with a similar one opposite you, and the chance of death at any moment makes one think a lot. But the holders of the front line did not seem to worry much about such a curious way of spending life. One man was on guard in each traverse, and watched for any movements, the rest sprawled about asleep, or sat in dug-outs, writing, reading, or playing cards. The cares and anxieties here are borne chiefly by the officers, usually by the junior ones, and they do not have much time to themselves. In the blazing sun the narrow trenches were extremely hot—soon they will be quagmires. For the most of the week I was there I had little to do in the day, except watching the aeroplanes being shelled, and looking out for any shells coming our way.

But the Hun was very quiet, and reserved his hate for the trenches. A very interesting entente occurred in the trenches next to us when I was with the Connaughts. One evening an officer was playing his gramophone in his dug-out, when a request was shouted over to play some ragtime. He did so, and then the Hun officer asked him to put the instrument on the parapet, promising not to shoot at it. This was done to the satisfaction of both sides. The Hun then suggested that the two officers should meet halfway unarmed. They did so, and meanwhile the men sat up on the parapet and smoked. The first question the Hun asked was, "Have you any men from the Trocadero?" Apparently some of his men were there before the war. The German staff, however, look with great disfavour on these ententes—they want hate all the time. When the time comes our men will show enough of it. It is almost unnecessary to say that the men opposite us are Saxons—the only decent Hun. On the last afternoon, when the evening hate was at its height, I got an urgent message to come to the front line. Our shells were coming over very low, and made one duck involuntarily, and the return pip squeaks and bombs were pretty thick and near. However, nothing happened, though I had to hug the trench several times to avoid fragments. They wanted me to see a poor fellow who had been shot through the head to decide whether he should be left there to die, or whether I could give him a better chance by taking him back. There he lay in pools of blood, in a narrow trench, in the remnants of an orchard,

on a fine evening, and high explosives were whizzing over us all the time, and possibly going to land a few more of us in the same condition. It was not a nice sight, but the realities of war are not poetic. At night I visited a neighbouring dug-out, and played bridge with the officers. It was highly dangerous to walk about in the open because of the bullets. And yet until lately we had to do this nightly to collect wounded. One did not appreciate it so much until he sat there night after night, and heard the whines of the high ones, and the swish of those landing near him. While I was there a new bomb thrower came up—a modern catapult engine. It was a beauty, and we practised with bricks and apples at all passers by. One of these was a major of the Connaughts, and he was rather angry when a half brick lobbed near him. These are just some odd jottings of a quiet week in the trenches. But soon all will be changed. This inactivity is nearly at an end, and long before this reaches you, hell will have broken loose, for our great attack, so long planned, is about to take place. May I come through it as before.

◈ ◈ ◈

7/9/15.

I HAVE just had a week in charge of the Divisional Train, whose doctor was on leave. The train consists of four companies of the A.S.C., who supply the various brigades. Naturally they were scattered, and it took a good four hours ride to get round them all. The ride, however, kept me in good form. Several of the days were very wet, but the last couple

have been brilliant, and quite made up for the wetting I then received. As the ambulance is resting things have been quiet. The only excitement has been aerial. I told you before about the captive sausage balloon above us. It was sure to attract the attention of the Hun, who eventually had a few shots which fell about a mile short. The other morning we saw a Hun biplane come over, disregarding all our "Archibald" shells, and sail right round the unfortunate balloon. Luckily it did not fire on it. Yesterday we saw an aerial duel. The Hun had a machine-gun, and forced our man to retire and come down wounded. Not content with bringing gas to this front, the Hun has also presented us with his battleplane or super-aeroplane. This monster was out over us on Sunday. It measures 60-70 feet across, and has two sets of engines. It is very fast, and must be a terror to meet up in the air. It had the cheek to come over and fire with the machine-gun on our trenches. However, cheer up, I have just read about the wonderful aeroplanes we are about to use. Though usually last in the field with anything new, we are said to have the limit now—a plane capable of doing 158 miles an hour.

I got a couple of footballs for our personnel—British and native—and already they have given a lot of pleasure. It makes time pass more quickly, and makes them a lot cheerier. It does make one laugh to see the natives playing. The majority know nothing of the game, but they play with plenty of noise and vigour. With their long stick-like legs, the hair done up in a knot on their

heads (Sikhs), or just a little pigtail, they look very picturesque. The havildar, or sergeant, is referee, and he imports his authority on to the field. The penalty for handling the ball is a clout from the referee, and to be chased off the field. That rule works wonders. We hope to have a gramophone for next winter, and to get up a penny whistle band, and so pass away the long dreary hours of darkness.

I am keeping very fit with a run every morning, and then physical exercises, followed by a cold tub in the open.

◈ ⊞ ◈

8/9/15.

(Referring to letters surmising that he was in a fine chateau, the writer says:—

I WAS very amused at your thinking that my chateau was an old mediaeval structure, as a matter of fact it was a modern house attached to a glucose factory, which stank like Pinkenba. This part of France does not abound in old mansions. It is too industrial. About six miles off is Bethune—the Newcastle of the North of France, and the centre of all the coal mines. While we have two mines here, the country is quite flat and covered with crops. Harvesting has finished, and the farmers are hard at work ploughing the fields again. They don't mean to waste any time. All the labour is done by old men and women and children, not to mention the poor decrepit horses. Many

a poor brute who should have finished his days in peace has now to do a very heavy day's work. I don't think anything has surprised the Indians more than the reapers and binders. In India everything connected with agriculture is very primitive, and the men looked agape at the machines so common to us. I know that some of the more wealthy have written for catalogues for future use. You may not know that practically every soldier aspires to be a land owner, if even it may mean a small plot. After serving their time they get a grant of land. So all this intensive cultivation has a great interest for them.

(In this letter, written on the anniversary of his entering Aldershot, the writer reviews his experiences of the year, more fully referred to in previous letters.)

◈ ⚄ ◈

11/9/15.

WHAT a contrast with this day a year ago. After fretting for a month, I was at length called up. I had left the Rotunda with the hearty wishes of those who had worked with me for three years. I was off to an unknown world, and with about a dozen other freshers, we entered the army portals at Aldershot. We were very raw, and did not know what to do, or where to go. We drove to the wrong place first, and finally ended up at the R.A.M.C. depot, where a kindly Colonel welcomed us. Some men went to hospitals, but I thank my stars now that I got a regiment. I shall not forget the long six miles ride in a decrepit cab, out

to Blackdown—an elevation in the wilds of Hampshire, overlooking the Bisley Range. It was late when I arrived, but a warm welcome was waiting me from the Colonel of the Ninth King's Royal Rifles—a Sahib, as I was to learn soon. Those were the days when the men poured into Kitchener's Army, and when the organisation was more absent than present. All honour to those who came forward then and suffered great discomforts for their country. Here was I, miles away from anywhere, dumped down to look after 5,000 men. Nobody to help me, to give me any details of army methods. So I just had to plug ahead, and do my best. Of course I had a great pull after the Rotunda—three years of teaching—of learning to meet emergencies quickly, and solve them at once, before keenly observant people—all these are bound to leave their mark. Apart from my own work, there was very much to be learnt, watching the small number of officers, licking the raw material into shape. They were willing to learn, and even my attempts to help them in details such as the care of the feet, were warmly welcomed. Then came the appeals for men to be inoculated. The majority were wise, but there were many foolish virgins, and they took a lot of persuading. The time went quickly, and I began to hunger for more active service—unloading trains of wounded made one wish to be off and abroad. The chance came, and I took it. I shall never forget my farewell to my first regiment. The Colonel said goodbye, and then called for three cheers for their first M.O. He was a thorough English gentleman in the fullest

sense of the word, and died in the first battle his men experienced—the liquid fire attack at Hooge. Still, he had the great joy of leading the men he had trained from raw cubs into an ordeal quite different from any of his previous fights. May his spirit rest in peace, and I am glad I served under him. One left England with mingled feelings—it was not like the usual method of travelling to the Continent. The patrols in the Channel and the precautions were strange. Eventually, after cruising round we landed at Boulogne, and once more I was fully trusted by my O.C. The first days of getting No. 14 Stationary Hospital into order were nightmares, but everybody worked hard, and the deed was done. Then came two and a-half months hard work, but pleasant—when you have your superiors behind you all the time life is worth living. Like a recurrent fever, once more the attack came on me, and I wanted to penetrate into that fog, beyond which was the mysterious region called "The Front." While at Boulogne it was difficult to get up to where war really was. Finally I was off in a slow train, and was dumped out next morning with my first glimpses of Indians. Soon I reached my ambulance, and have been off and on with it ever since. Immediately we went into action I was sent out to form an advanced dressing station, again with no instructions, and only the vaguest notion as to what I was to do. I got my baptism of fire right enough, and soon learnt a few of the mysteries of war. The winter and all its discomforts are far behind us now, but a fresh one looms up. One knows what to expect even though

it is not very welcome. The time until spring was enlivened by my extra jobs as O.C. Baths and O.C. Washhouse. The latter was really very funny, though extremely strenuous, and I have more respect now for the washerlady. I got a week with the Connaught Rangers, and then came Neuve Chapelle, and Ypres with the Highland Light Infantry. That fairly initiated me into all the horrors of war. Since then I have had odd regimental jobs, and routine with the ambulance. Something new seems to come in my way every three months, and I am waiting now for the next one. One is often asked what one's feelings are under fire. It is not pleasant, but if you are working hard you don't mind. The roar of the shells is rather disquieting, but the swish and ping of bullets still makes one duck. I have never got used to them absolutely, and neither has the average man if he tells the truth. The more brain development a man possesses the less he gets accustomed to war. The average Tommy does not mind in the least, but I have seen an officer, who ran a special risk, have his hair turned grey in a week from worry. The life is rough at the front, and death is very near all the time, and at very unexpected moments. But one gets used to it all, and more or less takes life as it comes. To one working hard, the best part of it all is the confidence of senior officers once you have earned it. I am in the happy position of being desired by three regiments—their O.C.'s have asked for me, and want me back. Enough to turn my head, but I trust you will understand the spirit in which this is written. I have given my best to

the work, and the reward is sweet. Now I have been promoted to captain, after a year's service. I am no longer a raw recruit, but fully fledged in all the grim work of war. I am sitting in an orchard watching the guns shooting at aeroplanes, and everything seems so peaceful. But at any moment I may be called to those blasted roads and fields to do my duty, and the call is coming soon. The work at the Rotunda seems to belong to another period, and my fingers must certainly have lost their cunning to a large extent—but I wouldn't have lost this chance of serving my country. It has been a hard apprenticeship, but it has done me good in many ways. At present I am fitter than I have ever been before—sunburnt and full of life. I may not come through this war, but I have no regrets so far. Pardon the egotistical view of this letter, but one is tempted to digress on the anniversary of my joining the corps. Getting one's captaincy is like a graduation. You cannot exactly describe one, without having experienced the other.

◈ ⊞ ◈

14/9/15.

THE weather began very badly for September, and we had three days of the most wintry type. Now, however, it is very hot, and the month will probably be a good one. This should have some effect on the campaign. At the present moment nothing seems to be happening on our front. But the Hun is getting very restless and anxious to know what our game is, and

especially where we mean to strafe him. Bombardments are going on daily, and the German aeroplanes are much more active than before. We get at least three or four daily, well over our lines. We, too, are rather restless, for we all know that the big push is about to take place. But the exact time and place are kept secret, though one can guess at certain possibilities. Long before you get this we shall be through another hell, and may I come through safely. We lost an aeroplane a few weeks ago, which fell into the German lines. When our officer was speaking to the Hun (at the entente referred to in a recent letter) the latter told him that both officers were dead, and were given a military funeral. We got our revenge the other evening, when "Archibald" popped off and hit an aviatik. It was a sickening sight to see the plane slowly circling down, and then finally plunge to earth. The same day we saw one of the coolest acts of bravery seen in the war. An aviatik was coming over our lines, when it was hit by a shell, on the left bottom plane. The plane then inclined upwards towards the other one. The machine was lopsided and began to stagger, and then turned turtle several times. The observer got out, and stood on the damaged plane to balance the machine. Eventually he lay down on it. The pilot was then able to bring the machine down safely. That man deserved the Iron Cross, First Class, and we hope he will get it. Our men appreciate a brave deed, and they did not fire on the plane, but gave him a cheer in recognition of his feat.

(The writer here refers to a handy manual, or booklet, which he had written at the request of the O.C. It gave practical hints to regimental doctors on first entering on active service in the field. He had been highly complimented by his O.C. on this work. He has sent a copy, but it is official, and for the present confidential. He simply wrote down his own personal experience as a guide to others.) He says:—I have done a year's service, and have graduated in the corps, and been promoted. This is my thesis, and I have referred to nothing except what I actually did. It will be a reference for those writing the medical side of the campaign.

◈ ⊞ ◈

19/9/15.

Referring to letters from Brisbane about the internment of Germans, the writer says:—

NO one can accuse me of having nothing but hate for the Germans, but after being out here and seeing what the devils can do, one is almost in favour of shutting up the lot. I know there are plenty in British possessions who are perfectly loyal, but there are others, especially in Great Britain, and it is hard to pick them out. The golden rule doesn't apply to the Hun, and he has not left any of our side free in Germany. At any rate, our job here is to exterminate the breed, and we are all keen on it. Things are still the same, but events are moving quickly, and I may be delayed in my next letters to you. I expect to go to a regiment tomorrow, or the next day, for a fortnight. That should cover a lot. We are ready now for the signal, and may it come soon.

EXPERIENCE TEACHES.

In our reports we recently got an extract showing Teutonic thoroughness. The main dental paper stated that gold was no longer available for repairs, and that most substances were scarce. They had begun to extract the teeth from dead Russians and use them!

From Kitchener's last speech it seems as if conscription was coming nearer. Only the inner circle know exactly how we stand, and if they want it, then it must come. It will do a lot of slackers good to be compelled to join, and do something. Yesterday I was over at a small town where a branch of the official canteens has been opened. The charges are most reasonable, and duty free. The men are all under military law. Grocers are dressed in khaki, but they have not lost their professional ways, especially in making out the bill. I had better give you a sketch of field work once more, as it has been modified somewhat since the winter. Then all aid posts were in houses about half a mile or so back. These have now ceased to exist largely. The medical officer lives in a dugout at the commencement of the communication trench to the front line. He is thus well up, and gets a liberal share of anything in the way of hate, which may be on at that time. The dugout is generally small, and one cannot stand upright in it. One has a stretcher for a bed, and possibly a chair, if one can be secured. The roof is more or less thick, usually less, and will protect one from splinters; but if a shell, no matter what size, landed on it, there would be a vacancy in that regiment. At

present these dugouts are quite dry, but in winter they will be the limit. Rain will drip in, and the floor will be more than moist. However, we may be elsewhere, or at least they may be made more watertight. The orderlies have another dugout, and patients go there. In this Division we also have Indians, who take over the cases, and conduct them back to the advanced dressing stations. We have two of these for our front, and they are worked by the Field Ambulance in turn. One consists of a good house, well protected by trees. Because of the colour of the door it is called the Green Barn. Here the facilities for looking after the cases are much more elaborate. The serious cases are redressed and placed in the motors, which come up as far as this. It is well forward in the danger zone, and of course, may be shelled at any time. The other post is composed solely of dugouts, because it is in a warm spot, which the Hun dearly loves to strafe. Cases are not kept there for long, but sent straight to the Field Ambulance. Reserves of dressings are kept, and so when a regiment runs short, they can quickly get a fresh supply. In both places the transport of cases up from the aid post is facilitated by a light tramway. The men are placed on trucks, and quickly pushed by hand. Naturally, the Hun knows of this line, and it is not a pleasant spot, especially at night time, when the ration parties use it, and bullets whizz over continuously. With the present trench warfare the scheme of advanced dressing stations works very well. It prevents men being detained in aid posts all day, and gets them rapidly out of the front zone.

22/9/15.

I AM under half an hour's notice to move up with another officer and our natives in reserve to the Field Ambulance already open. Our ambulance will stay back here, and take sick only. If we break through, then our sections rejoin, and the whole ambulance will push right on. I feel quite calm, as befits an old war-horse, but of course accidents may occur. The day before yesterday we had a surprise visit from Kitchener, who reviewed a brigade close to us. He was looking very fit, and gave us a huge smile. We took it as a good omen that he has Kaiser Bill on the hop this time, and won't let him go. As a matter of fact, we have one or two surprises for the Hun, but I must keep glum on them just now. The artillery have been hard at it for days, and the Hun front line trenches should be very unhealthy spots.

◈ ⊞ ◈

29/9/15.

I CANNOT write much this time, as I am extremely busy. We are in the middle of the great fight, and are doing very well. It is cheering to know we are fairly strafing the Hun at last. I was up near Neuve Chapelle when our attack began. The guns made a great noise, and then we sprang a surprise on Fritz. He didn't like the gas one little bit either. But the main surprise was the use of smoke bombs. These emitted a dense white cloud, and prevented the enemy from seeing what we were up to. It is the first good trick we have not borrowed from the Hun. Our men made a feint, and pierced

three lines of trenches, thought to be impregnable. But the attack was only a feint, and they then withdrew. Down south the First Army is going great guns. We rejoined our unit last night, and to-day I am under orders to join a new division, for an unknown destination. We are off to a new bit of the line, probably to be thrown into the breach. It promises to be very exciting. You will understand that for some days I cannot write you fully, but I shall make up for it later. Now for a repetition of Ypres, but with the guns on our side. The weather is not good, but one cannot have everything.

◈ ⊡ ◈

4/10/5.

IN sending thanks for a parcel of tobacco, which friends had sent for distribution, the writer says: "A warm drink and a smoke are really the best dressing we can apply to the men when they come in to us.

I take the opportunity of a slight lull to tell you something of the great fight still going on

Our part has been a passive one, but we had an important task to do, though it did not take us into the limelight. For several weeks we knew that the offensive was coming, and we heard daily the thunder of French artillery in Artois. This gradually got more and more intense, and, finally, on 23rd September, we got our instructions. We went over the kits carefully, and made every preparation for a rapid march.

24th Sept.—

At 10.30 a.m. we marched with 100 natives and equipment to a village not far away. I was immediately detailed to go to the advanced Dressing Station, with one officer from the ambulance. It is hard for you to realize the suppressed excitement we all felt. After all these weary months of waiting and of hope deferred, we felt that at last "the day" was coming for us. We had the men and a big stock of guns and ammunition. After lunch I went out and toured the trenches. We saw all the regimental medical officers and talked over plans for the morrow . There were new communication trenches to be inspected and signboards put up directing wounded to our dressing stations. One felt rather ghoulish or callous in letting the men see all these inevitable preparations. Meanwhile the bombardment grew more and more intense. All the guns were firing rapidly and doing great execution on the German front line trenches. We were wandering along roads about 700 yards behind, and the roar was deafening. Field guns were barking all round us and above them we could hear the big shells coming over from far back. Aeroplanes were cruising about directing the batteries, but the Hun was too busy to give them much attention. The enemy trenches were enveloped in a mass of smoke, with fragments hurled up every now and then, well above the pall. Gunner officers were very pleased with themselves. The Hun reply was very feeble—a few "krumps," but mostly "pip squeaks," which did no damage. Away south where the main attack was coming the noise was continuous. Everything

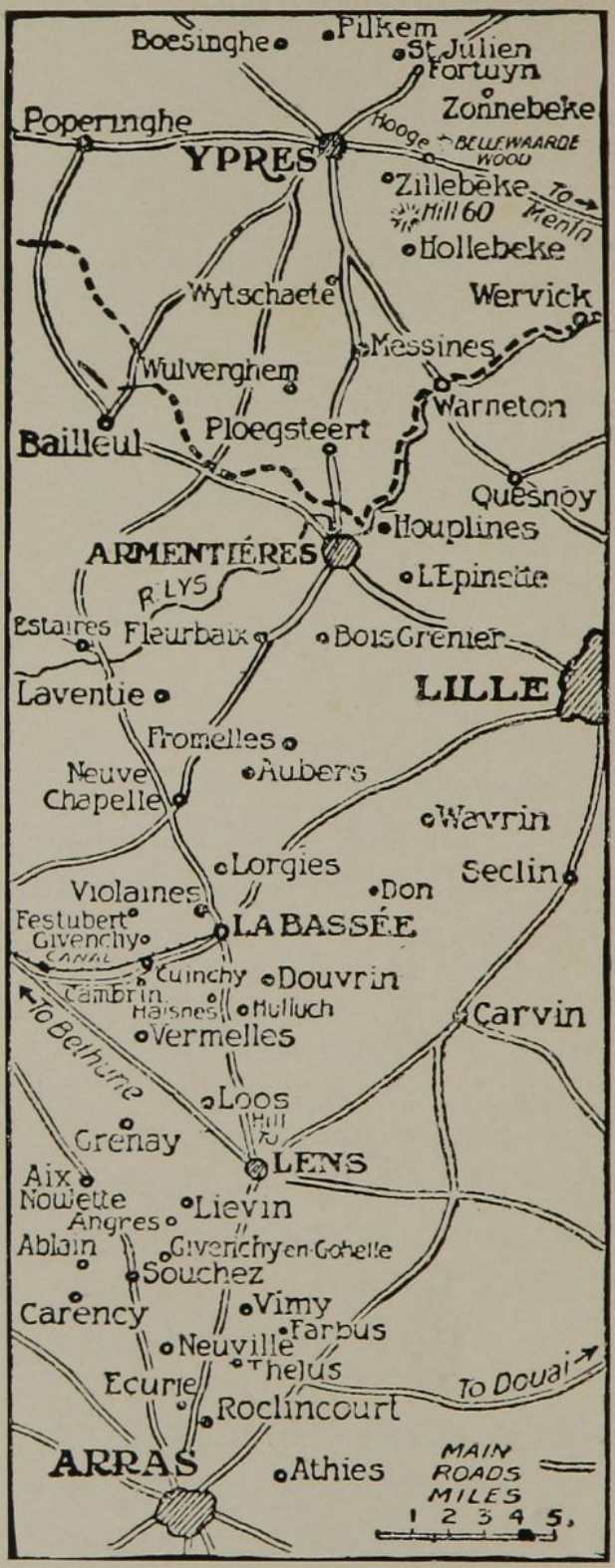
pointed to a good beginning for us. On our way back, up the La Bassee road, a sniper had a couple of shots at us, but his aim was bad. That evening we made our final preparations, and all through the night the guns fired at ten-minute intervals to prevent the enemy from repairing the damage. At 5 a.m. we had all our men in position. Eight natives were stationed at each aid post to direct or carry up cases. Eight others under a lance naik (lance corporal) were stationed in a lime kiln about half way. They had four-wheeled stretchers to bring cases rapidly to us. In addition there was a light tramway, which passed near us, and stretcher cases could be brought up on the trucks. We had a good service of cars, and about a mile back were horse ambulances, ready for walking cases, with guides all the way up. Thus we prepared for a rush—no matter how heavy.

25th Sept.—

Punctually at 5.45 a.m. the final bombardment began, and hell was let loose. All our guns were concentrated on a half mile front, and the noise was the worst I have ever heard. The 18-pounders barked as fast as possible, and above them the gurgle of the big shells coming from miles back. A heavy bombardment is a wonderful thing—more especially if you are behind it! At Ypres I was the recipient of such attentions and got all I wanted. Now it was our turn to give the Hun a dose of his own medicine. I climbed a tree near by and watched the show as well as I could. Nothing could be seen of the trenches; they were hidden by dense clouds of smoke,

with the flash of bursting shells lighting them up continuously. The guns then stopped, and the attack began. On our front the Meerut division of the Indian Corps was given the honor of attacking. We were only to advance if they were successful. In any case the whole attack was to be an elaborate feint to keep the Hun from sending troops down South. We had a couple of surprises for him, and they were now used. First we turned the gas on him, and he did not like it at all. They were not fully prepared for it, and most of their respirators were in trench stores, and not easily got at in a hurry. Our next surprise was quite unexpected. Copying naval tactics we employed smoke to screen our movements. Smoke bombs were thrown from the trenches, and went off with a shower of sparks, emitting a dense white cloud. This rose to a height of 150 feet, and effectively prevented the Hun from seeing our men get out of the trenches, and also from what they were doing.

Even at this early hour the weather decided, as usual, to go against us. It has been so in every attack we have made. An hour before the attack began the wind was in our favour, but it suddenly changed, and blew from the Hun to us—thus preventing an extensive use of gas. Rain too began to fall. However, off dashed the Meerut Division, and we in the dressing station sat and waited the cases . They were not long in coming. A shot from the enemy hit a gas cylinder in our front line, and the escaping gas laid out several of our men. Some came back on stretchers, but the majority walked. One could tell the



The Battle Area described in Letters.

gas cases at a distance by their gait. The poor fellows staggered along, reeling from side to side and quite dazed. They could not answer any questions, and just lay down and went to sleep, or gasped for air. The results of gas poisoning are not pleasant to look at.

Meanwhile the Huns had begun to shell pretty heavily, and the wounded came in freely. About 7 a.m. one of our Brigades passed down the road, walking quietly in Indian file, to take up their position. They were not shelled.

News soon came in that the Meerut Division had passed the Huns' first line trenches and were going on. They went on and on, and in their ardour they exceeded what was planned, and broke right through the Hun lines. This was no mean achievement, for the trenches opposite us were supposed to be impregnable. But there were no supports, all available troops were elsewhere. Eventually, by midday, they were back in their own trenches with many dead and wounded. This action held up large reserves from going south to the real push, and it also showed that the line could be broken here. We only figured in the reports as having "demonstrated," but it was a big battle, judged by old standards.

During an action one hears the wildest rumours—generally pessimistic. A wounded man cannot be expected to give the cheeriest, or most lucid description of what is happening. He generally tells one that his

regiment has been wiped out, or else that they have been driven back. Through the whole of the morning we got all sorts of rumours, principally good ones. We heard that in the front line trenches of the enemy, many men were lying dead from the gas. Some of the cases looked like poisoning by a certain gas—not our gas. I must not tell the substance yet awhile. We heard too that there were a good many prisoners. At last a cry was raised, "Here come some Huns!" and we all rushed out. A corporal of the Black Watch and a pal were proudly marching five Huns along the road. You should have seen the proud air of the conquerors. No one was going to rob them of their spoils. I stopped them and spoke to them. They were all young men, rather small, but well developed—well fed, and well clothed. But they looked dazed and a trifle scared, as well they might, after that bombardment. The sight of those men,—visible proof that we were progressing, was the most powerful stimulus we have had for months. By mid-day everything was very quiet, and one would not have known that a great fight was on. By 3 o'clock it began to rain heavily, and further advance was impossible.

But we began to get cheery news of our comrades, and the French, and that made up for the natural depression we all felt. It is easy for one to sit at home and read of a demonstration being made at a certain point, which held up the enemy's reserves from going elsewhere. However, we were only a microscopic part of the line, and we had only a single line part—not the

limelight all the time. It is curious how men are invariably downhearted after a show like this, while the higher command are pleased with the result obtained, as they were in this case. They get a clearer perspective of the whole, of course. An important part in the attack was shared by the R.N.A.S. They had naval 10-pounders right up in the front line. These guns are quick firers, about 15 shots a minute, and quite as good as the Bosche "pipsqueak"—a similar gun. The shells could penetrate seven sand-bags—so were capable of a considerable amount of damage.

We heard with great regret of the death of the medical officer of the Leicesters. He was an old Dublin boy, and I knew him well. When the Leicesters advanced he went on over the parapet, but was killed by a shell shortly afterwards. While one may doubt the wisdom of what he had done, still he was a brave boy, and had been awarded the Military Cross ten days previously for a very gallant deed.

This night was fairly quiet, except for rifle and artillery fire to prevent the enemy repairing his trenches. As usual, the Hun was up to his customary dirty work—firing on the wounded as they tried to crawl back. He did not use paraffin, or incendiary bullets this time, probably because they were not handy. It is this absolute disregard of all rules of fighting which makes us hate the German. Squeals for mercy don't prevent the bayonet being pushed home, but they

have only themselves to blame. The Hun has ceased to be regarded as a man—he is simply a beast to be exterminated as quickly as possible, and thus repay doubly all that was done to France and Belgium. Though no advance was made all day, the batteries were busy wire-cutting, with successful results. I spent a good part of the day up a walnut tree, watching the shells bursting on La Bassee and Lens. A continual cloud of smoke slowly drifted over those spots, and we could see the flashes of the bursting shells. Prominent on the horizon stood the two gaunt pit heads of Lens. which our men call the "Tower Bridge." Up to this the Hun had not used his artillery to any extent, but in the afternoon he fired all over the place. A "Krump" passed over our tree, and landed about 150 yards away. I distinctly felt the hot air from it, and did not stay much longer up aloft—the dugout was more inviting. But it was only a stray shell. Earlier in the day we saw rather an extraordinary sight—a German shell was coming down very near a battery, when it hit the branches of a tree, and exploded in mid air. It was a big shell, and gave us a fine firework display.

I have referred to a convenient limekiln, where we had stationed eight Indians, under a N.C.O. to evacuate cases to us. They did good work. When the attack was in progress yesterday the Germans shelled this area very severely, to prevent any advance, and we had the majority of casualties from there. The N.C.O. was an ex syce (groom) who had just been promoted. He

was down there absolutely alone, but he got a grip of the situation, and controlled his post like a veteran. Cases came back quickly, and without delay. The lot of them worked on steadily, regardless of the shell fire, and I was very pleased with the way they did what was asked of them. The Indian kahar, or dooly bearer, is one of the surprises of this war, and in a future letter I hope to tell you more about him. But lance haik Jaisi Ram, though quite new, rose to the occasion, and no one could have done better work. I have recommended him for practical work, done under trying circumstances, and I hope he will get official recognition. These humble men do not get into the limelight, but their work is frequently deserving of more recognition than it gets.

We spent the evening very snugly, with a gramophone and a few artillery friends. It helped to make us forget the wet outside.

27th Sept.—

The evening had been very quiet. Our guns were on a restricted ration of shell, as there was no object in firing unnecessarily. The day gave promise of improving, but early in the afternoon it was raining as hard as ever. In the morning I was walking along the road by the dressing station when a stray bullet nearly finished me. It just missed my head and shoulders, and was about the closest shave I have yet had. Where it came from was a mystery, but it made me take a greater interest in my surroundings than I was showing at the time.

We were recalled late in the afternoon, as active operations had ceased on our front. On the whole we were glad to get back to our own unit. Mixed ambulances only work really well when both lots are equally good.

28th Sept.—

The morning was spent in going over our kits, and renewing anything necessary. Suddenly we got an order to have two sections ready to join an Indian Field Ambulance, to form a mixed unit to accompany one of our Brigades to another Division. This looked more like the real thing, as we knew there were prospects of going down to the big push. We had only a few hours to get ready, and were off once more at 5 p.m. After we reached the rendezvous we joined up, and proceeded down South to a small village, about six miles from here. I was in charge of the transport, and as it was raining hard, and a dark night, my job was not an enviable one. Long before we got in I was wet through, and so were most of the others. When we arrived at the village we found no billets. This is an old complaint of most of the units. However, we crowded all the Indians in a schoolhouse, and after wandering about I got a floor to sleep on in a cottage. The people in the village were very kind, and did all they could to help us—a pleasant change from some places near here. In the midst of all the worry, re billets, my watercart backed into a deep ditch, and that did not add to one's pleasant feelings.

We were told that our Brigade was taking over the

line just north of the La Bassee Canal, and so relieving a division that had got some hard knocks a few days previously, when demonstrating, like the Meerut Division. As it was new country we looked forward to working it.

29th Sept.—

With the O.C. of the Ambulance I motored out to the Advanced Dressing Station, and took over from the men already there. Then I stayed out on duty. We approached the front along the La Bassee Canal—a very picturesque route as far as that bit was concerned, with plenty of green woods. But before the Canal there were the usual small railways and slagheaps, and the dreariness associated with all coalmining areas. However, the country was much more undulating, and that was a pleasant change. As one passed along the Canal path, straight ahead was seen dead and splintered trees, over ruined houses. Without any other sign, that was sufficient to mark where the trenches lay. In the future dead trees will always remind me of this war. Parallel with the Canal ran the railway, and we saw an armoured train with steam up, ready to go forward into action. After going along the Canal for about two miles we came to an open part, where we saw a big, ruined farm on a small rise. It was the Dressing Station—Lone Farm. In front of us lay a fair sized village, mostly in ruins. It was Givenchy—the scene of very fierce fighting, especially in December last, for it lies opposite La Bassee. We crossed the canal by "Westminster Bridge,"

but I think the L.C.C. maintain better roads than the next one we got on.

Lone Farm must have been a big place before the war. It was built in a hollow square, with very high walls. All the sides, except where the living rooms were had been destroyed by shell fire. But there was a good cellar left, and the rooms were very big, and handy for our work. I could never see to what use they had been placed in peace time, for we could not discover where the fire place was or had been. I was not greatly taken by the height on which we were. The farm stood out too much for my liking. I am a modest man, and I like a ruined cottage which does not attract the Hun's artillery. This opinion was strengthened by the fact that shortly after our arrival the Hun began to shell the road, very accurately, finishing up by one at our front door. There were some heavy batteries behind us, and they were a magnet for most of the shells. I was also told that the previous ambulance had done some queer things. They flew a Union Jack on the building until the gunners made them take it down; they hung a lantern with a red cross sign outside their gate, and also ran motors up and down the roads close behind the trenches. New comers, of course, and full of book knowledge based on previous wars. We old veterans know the Hun better; but we were paying for the pranks of the others. The view from the farm was decidedly prettier than our own at Neuve Chapelle. Behind us were woods full of game and birds; in front low ridges with the ruins of

Givenchy, and beyond the ridge the Hun—not on top for once. On the other side of the Canal we could hear the roar of battle, as the struggle went on from Haisnes and Hullach, only a short distance away.

Before it got dark I had to wander round and find out the aid posts, and the general lie of the land. The road went gently uphill for about half a mile, and it was well pitted by the morning's hate. The houses were all ruins. Soon we came to a cross road—Windy Corner. This was a good spot to get the geography of the locality. It had also very lively memories for my fellow medico. He was here in December, and this corner was the centre of cross fire of two German machine guns. Lucky was the man who crossed it unhurt. To the left the ground gradually sank down to Festubert, and beyond that was our own area of Neuve Chapelle. The eye saw nothing but dead trees, so far as it could see. In front of one was a low hill, no higher than, say, Musgrave Park in South Brisbane, but judged by the conditions here, it seemed a veritable mountain. It was honeycombed with communication trenches. At one end a jagged pile of bricks represented what was once the Church of Givenchy, and further round were clumps of debris—the Town Hall, etc.

Leading down from Windy Corner to the Canal was a road with a large number of miners' cottages, in quite good condition. They enabled the troops in reserve to have a good billet, but why they were left intact

by the Germans was a mystery. There was one open space between them, which had to be crossed by a communication trench, as the road was liable to be under fire at any time. The last part of the road was quite open, but was shielded by the hill. The houses round about the bridge over the Canal had suffered very severely—they were practically shells. On the enemy's side of the bridge a screen had been erected to prevent him seeing anything passing over to Cuinchy, the neighbouring village. The enterprising Hun had a couple of snipers posted in mud fortresses on both banks of the Canal, higher up. They fire straight down, and make things unpleasant for any dawdlers along the Canal banks. Near the bridge was the distillery. The most rabid teetotaller could not have smashed it up as completely as the Germans have done. Boilers lie about all over the yards, and pipes are twisted into extraordinary shapes, and massive pieces of machinery have been tossed about like paper weights. It was a very realistic example of the power of heavy shells.

The soil is sandy, and a great contrast to our waterlogged zone. Having seen the Medical Officers we walked back. Everything was quiet, save for an occasional bullet singing overhead. Four aeroplanes passed back from some strafing expedition, and we hoped it had been successful. This village and the hill have been drenched in British and Indian blood. Fights have raged here since December, and they are not over yet.

La Bassee has always been the scene of severe fighting, and so far has resisted all frontal attacks. In this flat country every slight rise is of immense importance, and the Germans hold the majority of these vantage spots. In some very severe fighting in December last the low ridge of Givenchy was held by the Hun, and it took a great deal to displace him. In these operations the Indian troops took a prominent part, and lost heavily. The place was eventually captured by the Guards. Here there is a little cemetery, and the diversity of regiments bears eloquent witness to the troops who were there. Since then there have been many more fights, notably in May. Givenchy is like Ypres and Neuve Chapelle—one of the classic spots on the western front. The evening was rather disturbed by a six-inch gun behind us, which persisted in firing every half hour or so. I have become so seasoned now that it takes a lot to keep me from sleeping.

30th Sept.—

In the morning I made a two hours' tour round the aid posts, showing the way to my colleagues. It was pretty wet, and the communication trenches were ankle deep in many places. I enjoyed a fiendish delight in making one fellow with brand new field boots trudge through it all. Later on I again went out and brought back a poor little Gurkha suffering from shell shock. He had been standing alone in the front line when a big shell exploded near him. Apart from covering him with mud, it had done no actual damage to him. But his

nerve had gone, and there he stood shivering and shaking like a frightened child. I have seen many such cases, and the recovery is very slow. Later on I returned to the ambulance, and another man took my place. In my absence I found that things had been rather rough with them. There was still no room for us, and the schoolhouse had to serve both for hospital and shelter for our natives Under these conditions it was very hard to run a decent show. We feel like using explosive langauge, but "Their's not to reason why."

1st Oct.—

The weather is slowly improving, but still very cold. Early in the morning I saw the small church of the village full of troops, they had nowhere else to sleep. But it was not a pleasant sight, especially to an R.C. The men had hung their muddy clothes and putties on any projecting knob, and especially on the altar. This incident brought home the hellishness of war very strongly. The schoolhouse was also the Mairie, and the Maire was really a young girl. We never saw the Maire proper do any work, the young lady did everything. She was rather a belle, and knew it, and we had great fun flirting with her. Tommy Atkins gets all the feminine attention that is good for him, but in this part of the world the officer does not find much for himself. But we got a find at Essars, and Suzanne was kept busy all day exchanging jokes.

2nd Oct.—

The previous night reminded me of old Rotunda days. I was on duty, and was called up three times for severe cases coming in. An aerial torpedo had landed among some of the men, and the resulting injuries were rather severe. The setting of fractures took me back to the old days at the base hospital in Boulogne. Before breakfast we saw fourteen aeroplanes returning from an expedition. It was a fine sight, and we hoped that they had let off a good deal of hate. The Hun began to drop heavy stuff into Bethuen, about two kilometres away, and we could hear the explosions distinctly. As a means of retaliation "Grandmother" woke up, and began to cough 15-inch shells into Lens. The duel soon ceased. In the afternoon we were ordered to rejoin our units, and soon we were marching back over the same old roads to the same old spot which we first saw last March. However, it was very interesting to have been in another part of the line. Our share of the great fight has not been a prominent one, but we were doing essential work to enable the men south to push on.

◈ ⊞ ◈

12/10/15.

MY turn for leave came quite unexpectedly. This time I was lucky, for I got a motor-car drive to Boulogne. There were four of us, and we had a merry time. When officers go on leave they behave like schoolboys—the respite from danger is too good to be celebrated quietly. The road to the base was very fine. We struck several good "routes nationales," not

paved, but white metal. We passed over very hilly country, and it was a welcome change. Boulogne looked the same—full of hospitals and Red Cross workers.

The crossing was smooth and uneventful. The precautions re submarines appeared to be relaxed, as we showed lights and did not seen to be going at top speed. I had a very interesting talk with a Russian officer and his wife. He had been wounded at Lublin, and he had travelled from Petrograd, via Salonica. He was going to the Russian Embassy at the Hague. On the whole he was pleased with Russia's prospects, and said that Japanese munitions were coming in freely. London was a surprise, for it was as dark as a village. It was dangerous to try and cross the streets at night.

In Glasgow the writer "was struck by the number of women employed at the stations and as car conductors."

◈ ⚅ ◈

21/10/15.

I GOT the grand chance of a day with the fleet on war footing, and it was an experience. An old college chum is a surgeon on the super-Dreadnought battle cruiser Indefatigable, part of the famous squadron of Admiral Beattie. They were at the impregnable base at Rosyth. I shall never forget the sight I got from Dalmeny Station—the tall Forth Bridge, and then mighty ship after ship, extending up beyond Grangemouth. The launch took us past the Lion and the Tiger

(still afloat and fit, notwithstanding German reports to the contrary), also New Zealand, Princess Royal, and others. The climb aboard by a rope ladder gave the tars something to smile at. I was distinctly out of my element. The officers gave me a very warm reception, and they were fine chaps. They were thirsting for news, and I was able to give them a lot. As a return I was shown all over the boat, even to the secret spots, and the 12-inch guns were loaded for me. That was most interesting. By pulling one lever the huge gun was moved into any position by hydraulic pressure. By a similar means it was loaded—the whole operation being quite automatic. The best part of the ship was down below waterline in the control chamber. From here the ship could be steered when the bridge was shot away. It was a small room, surrounded with speaking tubes and dials. On one side was the range-finding board for the calculations to be worked out. The whole was a marvel of what mechanical skill can produce. We went down to the men's quarters, where we smelt the warm human odour, and saw burly men in all stages of dress and undress. Above a band was playing for the men, and games were going on. The Fleet is tired of getting so little to do, but they don't expect the Hun will ever come out. But the preparations can never be relaxed, for the enemy is waiting such a chance. They had just returned from an important duty, right under the nose of Germany, and had made a catch of enemy trawlers. The execution of Nurse Cavell has brought home to us what Hun methods are.

RETURN TO DUTY.

We can't massacre women and children, but we can avenge ourselves on the men—and we shall. The Hun has set the pace against all civilised rules, and he is going to get as good as he gives.

◈ ⊞ ◈

24/10/15.

I HAVE been back three days now, and am settling down to the routine. We had a smooth crossing, but were closely convoyed by a destroyer all the way. It looked as if some U boat might have been about. The train journey was very cold, and we were pitched out at 5 a.m. I was travelling with a man who had a car waiting for him, and so got quickly back to my unit. We had shifted from where we were to the town with the chateau, where we lived in June and July. But, alas, this time we were not in the chateau. Instead the hospital consisted of a couple of rooms, and with the increased number of cases due to the present bad weather the space is totally inadequate. One of the functions of an ambulance is to keep back mild cases, and so prevent abnormal wastage from the trenches. This we cannot do, and have to send everybody on. The first touches of winter tend to make one very peevish. To-day has been the limit—cold and grey and cheerless—driving rain all the time, and mud ankle deep. Another winter has set in, and well do we know what to expect. Gott strafe the Hun for letting us in for all this discomfort! Still, our comrades in the Dardanelles are worse off, and we have many comforts they cannot get. Since I have been away an epidemic of enteric has broken out

among the civilians here. I am not at all surprised, considering the insanitary surroundings. We are busily engaged in inoculating as many as will come up. On Sunday afternoon I did a lot of women and children, and got chaffed unmercifully by my colleagues. I took all the kiddies on my knee, and humoured them before sticking in the needle. The majority took it very well. My colleagues said that I looked the old family physician to the ground, and also inquired as to the size of my family, as it was evident I must be a happy father to do the things I did. One mite of four rushed up to me, and when I lifted him up, hugged and kissed me, to the huge delight of everybody. However, I have a warm spot for the children, and they reciprocate it. (The Editor has not deleted this personal cameo picture, because it throws a light on our relations with the people, and is in pleasing contrast to Dark Louvain.) From the appearance of things we are now going to settle down for the winter. I don't think there will be much more activity on the front until the spring, but I hope our men will be in greater comfort this time, and I believe that after November leave will be given every two months. I hope this is true, for we want frequent changes from this depressing spot.

◈ ⊞ ◈

1/11/15.

THE writer gives an interesting account of the actions in which the Lahore Division has played a very active part all through the war, but the actual facts cannot be published at present. After pay-

ing a high tribute to the Indians, he says:—" I don't believe the average natives really understand what they are fighting for. They fight because they like it, but it is all in an abstract sense. They have no real enmity against the Hun. This country is depressing enough for white men, but it is more so for natives accustomed to fighting among hills, and not lying in a trench for months on end. They cannot understand all this strange subterranean life. Give them a fight in the open, and they are satisfied. We have seen at Neuve Chapelle, Ypres, and lately in September how they can fight. There are other influences which count. Native regiments are recruited from definite areas in India, and the caste prejudice comes strongly into play. Their officers had been with them for a long time, and they act as fathers to them more than in a white regiment. They know their officers, and will follow them anywhere. But the casualties have been tremendous, especially among the officers, and new ones have taken their place. They are brave men, but the Indian does not take kindly and quickly to a new face. It is so different from a British regiment. There you can slump together remnants from any regiments, and the same old fighting spirit will continue. But you cannot mix Gurkhas and Sikhs, Hindoos, and Mohammedans.

There are very persistent rumours that we are to be taken out, and that our destination is—where, I must not mention. Referring to news just received of the death of an old school mate, who displayed great bravery

in the trenches at Gallipoli, the writer says: George was a daredevil fellow as a boy, and what he did was just like him. The best fighters here are always men of his stamp. The pity of these brave deeds is, that they seldom get recognised. There are too many of them in this war to get individual recognition. But to those who knew the men, the knowledge is sweet.

If only the slackers could see the conditions here, they could not remain indifferent. I wish I could show them our men standing already thigh deep in water, and rain falling every day, and mud everywhere.

I may not have had much medical work lately, but I have had abundant experience in removing wounded. It is indeed the real post of honour, though one does not feel it. "Keep smiling" is my motto, and it helps one along. I have the confidence too of my natives, and they would follow me anywhere. Some day I may pay the price, but I don't want to skulk behind because of danger. Don't think that I am foolhardy, because I am not, but if duty takes me anywhere, there I must go, and take all risks.

You will have a cable from me long before this letter reaches you, foreshadowing some important changes. It is practically certain that the Indian Corps is not going to spend the winter here. I am looking forward to a long journey, and then be shorn of all the little luxuries we manage to get here. It is a far cry from here to ———? but I should soon be able to give you a description of some new scenes, and mails may be very irregular.

INDIAN TYPES.—THE GURKHA.

3/11/15.

TO the average Britisher, the Indian natives come under two or three classes—the wiry Gurkha, the tall, bearded Sikh, and possibly the ordinary Punjabi infantry man. But there are many other distinct types. The most popular is undoubtedly the Gurkha. The small man from Nepaul comes nearest to Thomas Atkins of all the natives. He is a cheery soul, and enters into all the pursuits of the white man. Caste has little prejudices for him. He will eat meat, especially fowls, and you would be astonished to see how he can drink beer, with the thirstiest regular. He plays football well, and is always chumming up with the white soldier. Like most natives he is musical, and I shall never forget an impromptu concert I heard before a regiment left for the Dardanelles. Half a dozen whistles and a tin can were quite sufficient for a really good selection of waltzes and martial airs. He is handicapped by his small stature, in trench warfare. In fact, the parapet had often to be lowered. But he can fight against odds. Last winter one regiment was surprised, when practically all their rifles were out of action through having dropped in the mud. They only mustered seventeen rifles in the battalion, but they met the German charge and beat it off with their terrible knives—the kukris. Like most natives they excel in scouting work, but of that they have had very little so far. Coming from a mountainous country, they are lost on these plains. But officers assure me that no one can touch them in hilly country. While I was with the Highland Light Infantry



"A YOUNG QUEENSLANDER"
November, 1915.

I also did duty for some of the Gurkhas, and I was very much surprised at many things. They were very cleanly, and their billets were spotless. The French people prefer them to any other troops, because they are always helpful and clean, and never go thieving. The Gurkha has always had a great reputation. He was practically the Guard of India, and inclined to look down on the rest. He has a good deal of reason in his claim. Closely allied to the Gurkha is the Gahrwal, who comes from the lower lying parts of Nepaul. He is slimmer, and slightly taller, but you would probably not notice any difference. Previous to the war he was looked down on by the Gurkha as a very poor specimen. But he has had his revenge. The bravest fighting of all the campaign has been done by these men, especially at Neuve Chapelle. They advanced with magnificent elan, and when in a tight corner pulled themselves out in a manner which has stamped them finally as great fighters. The Gurkha will have to look out for his laurels, and never again can he speak slightingly of his cousin the Gahrwal.

The Sikh is familiar to you. There is no mistaking these magnificent men, tall and broad and black bearded. They are an elite race, and know it well. In fact, I think that is one of their failings. It is exceedingly difficult to get a Sikh to obey any officer, except their own. They have done great work too, and have suffered severely. Many of them are in pioneer regiments, and their record is a good one. They look the most

picturesque of all the troops—their turbans with a glimpse of yellow or red ribbon showing at the forehead, the beards carefully rolled up in a net, and their magnificent bodies. They all wear an iron quoit (kara) on their turbans. It is one of the five sacred symbols. It represents the quoit, or disc, used long ago as a weapon of offence, or concealed in their long hair it was a good protection from sword cuts. Other marks are the kach, or short drawers ending above the knee; the khanda, or small steel dagger, and the khanga, or wooden comb, worn in the hair. The hair is never cut short like the Gurkha, and it is amusing to watch Sikhs sitting in the sun drying the long locks hanging over their shoulders.

The frontier natives—Afridis and Pathans—are a curious cut-throat lot. You can tell them at a glance —small heads, and shifty black eyes, always watching for a sudden surprise. They live a life of constant vendetta, and they certainly look the part of brigands. They are fighters pure and simple, and like to go where the fight is thickest. They are very inconstant in their allegiance, and I don't think they mind for whom they fight. Naturally they do not form regiments by themselves, but are diluted by large drafts of more loyal natives. Many of them shave their heads completely, leaving only a greasy curl over each ear, and this style of coiffure does not add to their beauty. While some have deserted and caused them to get a bad name, still they have done some brilliant work. You can

understand how the cramped conditions of trench warfare and weather conditions have tired these men to an extent even white troops would feel. They are accustomed to stalk their foes behind boulders, and a warfare of trenches and "Jack Johnsons" is something strange.

The native cavalry man has never had a chance, and we know that they would do well. Their horses are scraggy little beasts, more like ponies. Each man owns his horse, and brings it with him when he enlists, and he can ride it too. One longs for the day when the cavalry can show that they are as good as their infantry comrades. The native officers and senior N.C.O.'s are very fine men indeed. With their grey beards they look the part, and they are most intelligent. Native officers usually buy commissions, and are men of estate in their parts. Very few rise from the ranks. In the cavalry the native officer usually brings a squadron of men from his village, and this reminds one very strongly of the old feudal system. They are entitled to a salute from white officers, and privates must stand to attention when addressing them. They live in messes by themselves, and they are the most loyal subjects we have. I formed a very high opinion of all of them whom I have met. Their devotion to the white officer is most marked. Last of all come the humble, but necessary camp followers—the Chisti, or water carrier, with his goat skins full of water, or brass pots carried on a pole like a Chinese gardener; the sweeper, and the man who cleans the houses, and yards, and latrines. I could go on to an unlimited extent on these noncaste men.

CASTE AND FOODSTUFFS.

The caste problem has been a difficult one. The fact that the natives had crossed the water was sufficient to uncaste them. When the forces return I believe they will all have to be recasted by their priests, for a consideration.

Taking the Hindus, who are in the majority, the staple article of food is an oatcake substance called a chupatti, made from atta, or whole flour and water. The flour and water are kneaded together and flattened out by hand, and the cake laid on a flat piece of iron over a fire and browned. This forms the sole ration of the majority of the men. It is eaten alone, or with a mixture of spices. When the chupatti has to last more than one day a certain amount of ghee, or butter, is added. The ghee is quite white, and is really clarified butter. The Indian is very fond of sugar, and gets a ration of ghur, or raw sugar in a very early stage of refinement. This and water are the simple foodstuffs eaten by the men. The meat eating natives have goat, and a few will eat beef. Each caste has its own cooks, and they are very particular. The Gurkha is especially fond of fowls, and eats them chopped up fine and made into a stew. There is a great difference, too, in the methods of killing animals—one lot cut off the head with a single blow, others bleed them to death, and each set has separate butchers. I have seen goat refused by men because a drop of blood from some beef had fallen on it. But after all the hardships of this campaign, many of these prejudices are dying out. When the troops came up first

some were told that bully beef was goat, and they ate it freely, but we don't trifle with their beliefs overmuch. The only men I know who enjoy bully are the Bhutias —men from Tibet, and quite Mongolian in features. All natives love fruit and milk, especially the Sikhs. The sweeper, or non-caste man, has an advantage over the others, for he can eat the Sahibs' leavings, and does so. On the whole the Indian is very cleanly in his personal habits, and shows a degree of modesty far beyond the white man. Lately we had an Indian chief with us. He had come out with two motor ambulances, which he had presented to the corps. While abroad he was given the honorary rank of captain, and he was very proud of it. But it was very amusing to watch him going along the streets with an umbrella in hand. The cold was too much for him, and he spent most of the day in his rooms in pyjamas before a roaring fire. While very intelligent in many ways he displayed a childlike innocence in others. Just like a child, if he saw anything he liked he wanted to buy it at once. When he saw his first aeroplane the desire to get one was strong, and he gravely said, "Yes I shall buy a four-seater!" We got him a few souvenirs, and took him down a safe trench, and he departed supremely happy.

I am very much in sympathy with the Indians. Some hard things have been said about them, but people do not realise that they have been fighting continuously since Christmas 1914, with no rests, and have been in every fight except Hill 60 and Hooge. I cannot give

full particulars at present, but when the complete history of the war is written it will be shown that they have done magnificently. They stood in the breach when our new armies were in the making. When they go east to get a rest they will be seen to better advantage, with natural conditions more in their favour. The aftermath of the war will bring many changes all over the Empire, and not the least of these in India.

◈ ⊞ ◈

8/11/15.

STILL living in an atmosphere of rumour and surmise re future destination, all of which is taboo at present. The indications are that we are going far away to a bleak spot. The future is delightfully vague, but we are in for some fighting. All our men want is a good rest, and then we shall be able to face the devil himself. He won't be a hard nut to crack after the Germans.

The King's accident deprived us of a sight of him. Apparently there were all sorts of rumours at home, that he was really wounded, and that the accident was graver than the published report. This is not true, and the account gave a truthful description of the accident.

After a terrible week of rain we have had some dry, cold days. The roads are in a terrible condition, and the trenches worse than last winter. I had to go through them yesterday to introduce the new ambulance. We went ankle deep in water to commence, and then slipped

about in mud and deeper water. At one point the Hun turned a machine gun on us, and we had to lie face down in the mud. The bullets came unpleasantly close. The parapet had fallen in in many places, and if this continues it will mean trouble for the front line. Thank goodness brother Boche is not much better off. In the places where we took his first line, he is now in his second, which has no fine dugouts. Opposite one sector the Hun has been hurling out abusive epithets at the Kaiser, and inviting us to come over. The only reply was a vigorous bombardment. North of us recently two Russian soldiers came in. I should have liked to have seen our Tommies' faces when they surrendered. The men had been taken early in the war, and were employed repairing the front line defences. This violation of the rules of treatment of prisoners of war is quite typical of the Hun.

We had the results of a shocking accident to-day. Two men were taking a fuse to pieces when it exploded. One poor fellow lost both eyes, and most of his face was blown away; the other lost an eye and a hand and part of his face. Both should recover, but they will be terribly mutilated.

The writer here indicates that he again had to consider an important question. He had been offered a vacancy in a famous regiment, with whom he had previous temporary association. "The officers want me, and it is a compliment not often paid. My O.C. does not

want me to go. I have been shown much consideration, and am rather in a quandary. I am invited to replace a crack man, and it would be a step up. The ultimate decision lies with the A.D.M.S., and I expect my O.C. will ask him to keep me on here."

◈ ⊞ ◈

11/11/15.

REFERRING to a description of a final leave "send-off" at a country station in Queensland the writer says: —

Your remarks re the "send-off" to the men remind one of the scenes at Victoria Station when the leave train returns. Many of the men are drunk, but it is hard to blame them. There are a large circle of friends, and all make merry—in all probability some will never return. The poor fellows get little cheer out here.

Since last writing we have moved to a spot about 15 miles behind the firing line. It is the concentration camp preparatory to a long journey. It is rather picturesque hilly country, and quite a change to the flats round Neuve Chapelle. It must look fine in summer, but now most of the trees are bare, and leaves are falling fast.

When going my rounds yesterday I met a company sergeant-major who had been through Mons, and was wounded. Miss Cavell assisted him to escape, and he was very full of her praises.

AN AMUSING STORY.

I read a most amusing story in a French paper lately, which contains a good deal of truth. The French authorities gave ours a certain number of Legion of Honour Crosses for our officers. Headquarters called for a list of names and got it—but the published list was quite different. After discreet inquiries it turned out that two lists had been mixed. One was that of the officers selected—the other gave the names of those inoculated against typhus—and the latter got the Cross! From what I know of the distribution of honors the story is not beyond belief.

◈ ⚄ ◈

15/11/15.

WE have had a very bad week of gales and rain, and the Cross Channel service has been completely upset. Now we have had a couple of dry, cold days, with heavy frost every night. Apart from my morning sick parade I have absolutely nothing to do, and time hangs rather heavy. To pass the time, and in view of possible future events, I have begun Italian, and with a bit of hard work I should get some knowledge in a month or two. This may come in useful.

◈ ⚄ ◈

24/11/15.

I HAVE got a few days extra leave, and am over here (London) enjoying myself. Now that we are off East we are all getting as much leave as possible. After this it will be good-bye to leave until we demobilise. In camp in France we are resting and getting back to tropical equipment. Kits have been reduced,

especially of winter clothing, and with the cold snap it is difficult to keep warm. We had a smooth channel crossing, and we were convoyed by two airships and a destroyer.

◈ ⊞ ◈

5/12/15.

Referring to the preparations before leaving, the writer says:—

ALL this waiting about is very wearisome, for we are right tired of everything. I would rather be down at Marseilles than hanging round these dirty farms. We are in a colliery area, and the country is very hilly. We have nothing to do all day long, and time hangs heavy. We expect that the first troops to entrain will leave this week, and it is not certain yet whether we will go with them then or later. I have to get my thin kit yet, but am waiting until we go east. It is distinctly humorous to hear that you are sending me a sheepskin jacket. My thoughts are more on sun helmets and short pants. Previous to this I have had a very busy time since I returned from leave. The O.C. and two other officers were away. Since we left the firing line we have been moving round in a circle and during the shifts I had command of the ambulance. When one has to act as leader of the procession and keep an eye on the transport it is no joke. We have mules now, instead of horses, and the drivers know nothing about them—nor do I! After my experiences last week I am firmly of the belief that a mule is the most cussed thing living. When not biting and

kicking he tries to go in every direction, except the one you desire. Good drivers would make a difference, but under our delightful system we get ex-naval men, for instance, with no knowledge of horseflesh at all. I am learning a trick or two during this war, outside of technical work. The following is the farewell address to the Corps from the King, which the Prince of Wales delivered to representatives from each unit:—

Message of His Majesty the King-Emperor to the British and Indian troops of the Indian Army Corps in France.

Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers, and men of the Indian Army Corps,—

More than a year ago I summoned you from India to fight for the safety of My Empire and the honour of My pledged word on the battlefields of Belgium and France. The confidence which I then expressed in your sense of duty, your courage and your chivalry, you have since then nobly justified.

I now require your services in another field of action; but before you leave France I send my dear and gallant son, the Prince of Wales, who has shared with My Armies the dangers and hardships of the campaign, to thank you in My name for your services and to express to you My satisfaction.

British and Indian comrades-in-arms, yours has been a fellowship in toils and hardships, in courage and endurance often against great odds, in deeds nobly done in days of ever-memorable conflict. In a warfare waged under new conditions and in peculiarly trying circumstances, you have worthily upheld the honour of the Empire and the great traditions of My Army in India.

WELL MERITED APPRECIATION.

I have followed your fortunes with the deepest interest and watched your gallant actions with pride and satisfaction. I mourn with you the loss of many gallant officers and men. Let it be your consolation, as it was their pride, that they freely gave their lives in a just cause for the honour of their Sovereign and the safety of My Empire. They died as gallant soldiers, and I shall ever hold their sacrifice in grateful remembrance.

You leave France with a just pride in honourable deeds already achieved and with My assured confidence that your proved valour and experience will contribute to further victories in the new fields of action to which you go.

I pray to God to bless and guard you and to bring you back safely, when the final victory is won, each to his own home—there to be welcomed with honor among his own people.

We have also had a very warm note from Field-Marshall French. I believe he has a very high opinion of what we have done. We all have nicknames, and they are used always. . . . One has to keep merry and bright on a show like this—there is quite enough gloom without adding to it.

◈ ⊞ ◈

12/12/15.

THINGS are jogging along quietly, but surely. The weather has been awful—gales, and rain every day, and no likelihood of immediate improvement. During the last four days there has been rapid progress in the transference of our division. All the troops have gone,and we go in two days. Yesterday I spent a very interesting

time at the station watching some units entrain. I was there for a purpose, because when we move, I am to be in charge of the loading operations. Just another job for me, and further experience as a handyman. The journey will take at least four days, instead of twenty-four hours mail train. We will have probably two halts daily to stretch our legs, and do some cooking. I may be in an ordinary truck. It will get us used to what is in store for use. Lately, brother Hun has been dropping 15-inch shells in a mining village about four kilometres from here. It is twenty miles behind the firing line; but there is an object in his methods, viz., to destroy a big ammunition depot. So far he has not succeeded. It was cheery news to we old veterans to know that shells were again somewhere near us.

Apparently the authorities are going to recognise at last that our native troops deserve some honours for what they have done. Lately we sent in a list of all the men who had done good work. I was glad that my protege of September 25th, who ran the limekiln post so well, has his name forwarded. He well deserves all he will get. The R.A.M.C. up at the front do a lot of quiet work under very dangerous conditions—they don't get much chance of the limelight. We see most of the sordidness of warfare, and little of the beauty—if there is any. But we see the heroism of our men. I shall never forget what I have seen of the devotion of the Indian soldiers to their officers. One has read of it, and I have seen the glitter of their eyes, and their devotion, when an officer

meets them or comes in wounded. The Hun doesn't understand how it all can occur. Such feelings between officer and men are beyond him.

◈ ⊞ ◈

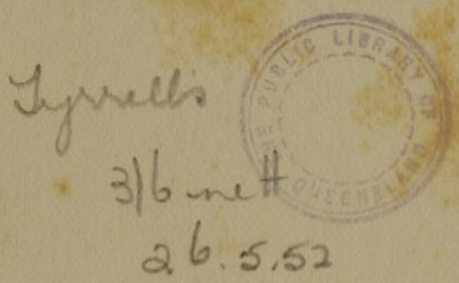
13/12/15.

WE have been delayed over twelve hours, and have just received Brisbane letters of the 31st October. All night long the roads have been rumbling with the transport going over them, and occasionally the skirl of the pipes. Native regiments are very partial to the bagpipes, especially the hillmen—the Pathans and Afridis. We move out about 8 p.m. Goodbye, now to bed for some days. I am hoping to get a stretch out in a closed waggon [waggon space for eight horses =32 to 40 men]. You may remember the legend, "Hommes 32-40—Chevaux 8."—Now we are to go through the mill.

Referring to letters from Brisbane the writer says:—

The unrest at home is reflected in all your letters. We, too, are very tired of reading the claptrap. Since a certain pressman (who had written glowing accounts) was sent home from the Dardanelles by the Censor he has been trying to get his own back by acting the part of a pessimist. Its poor comfort to the lads out here and elsewhere to read such "tosh." I believe the front line trenches on both sides, especially round Ypres, are in a shocking condition. They are non-existent in many

places—the parapets having subsided. There have been abnormal rains in a normally waterlogged country, and the result is awful. Rats have become a terrible plague, and something will have to be done soon. We know something of the conditions, and the men have our warmest sympathy. It will be good to get to a dry, sandy soil again.


Tyrrell's
3/6 nett
26.5.52